EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE

A mansion in horse country. Expensive cars line the circle drive. The lights are on. A party is underway.

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM

A blue-blood, pre-holiday gathering. Effete MEN and WOMEN chat, joke, flit about sharing Range Rover service problem anecdotes. CAMERA FINDS NATALIE STANDISH. She's in her late thirties, attractive and strong. Down to earth, from good, midwestern stock. Her simple dress and reserved manner make her stand apart from the other women she's reluctantly conversing with. They are snide and bitter people.

WOMAN 1
(to Woman 2)
You remember Natalie Standish, Doug's wife.

WOMAN 2
Of course.

NATALIE
Ex-wife.

WOMAN 2
Excuse me?

WOMAN 1
I'm sorry, Natalie.
(to Woman 2)
Doug and Natalie divorced a while back. Two years?

NATALIE
Almost.

WOMAN 2
I'm sorry to hear that.

WOMAN 3
How are you getting along without Doug? Is it difficult?

WOMAN 1
I imagine she's over the hump by now.

WOMAN 3
She's seeing someone else.
(to Natalie)
Isn't that right?

Natalie nods. She's being forced out of the conversation.

WOMAN 1
(to Woman 3)
Oh? Anyone we know?

WOMAN 3
I don't believe so.

WOMAN 2
How does Doug feel about all this?

WOMAN 3
I don't think he has much choice.
(to Natalie)
Am I right?

Natalie doesn't have a chance to answer.

WOMAN 1
So. Where is this new beau of yours?

INT. LIBRARY. DUTCH DOOLEY

He's in his late thirties, rough-hewn features, thinning hair combed back, a working class face. A somber grey suit. He stands out like fins on a coffin among the tweedy-casual men at the gathering. He's talking with a pair of tanned, fit, MIDDLE-AGED MEN.

DUTCH
I'll bet if I fired a shotgun in this room I wouldn't hit a Democrat.

He chuckles. The men stare. They don't understand.

MAN 1
No, I don't think you would.

MAN 2
Well, that's not true, Don. If one of the help came through...

MAN 1
True. True.

MAN 2
You mention shotguns. Do you hunt?

DUTCH
Nah. Every now and again, if I get tanked, I'll take a shot at a rat in the alley but no, not hunting in the sense you're talking about. Not ducks or anything.

The comment alienates the two men and brings an abrupt end to the conversation.

MAN 1
Damned nice talking to you, Dick.

DUTCH
It's Dutch.

MAN 2
At any rate, it was nice visiting with you.

MAN 1
If you're dating Natalie, I'm sure we'll be seeing quite a good bit of you.

They exit.

DUTCH
If I didn't love her, that'd be a heck of a good reason to break up with her.

Dutch finishes his drink. He sets the empty glass on a coffee table and exits the library.

INT. HOUSE. FOYER

The front door opens and DOUG STANDISH walks in. He's in his mid-thirties, handsome, aristocratic, haughty. He steps into CLOSE-UP.

INT. LOGGIA

Dutch and Natalie are alone in the loggia, looking out on the grounds. It's relatively quiet and peaceful.

NATALIE
How're you holding up?

DUTCH
I've been mistaken for the valet parking guy, the piano player, the butler and the bartender. I fit in here like tits on a typewriter. How are you doing? You look a little spit upon.

NATALIE
I've had better evenings. But the Sydney's are nice people and I've come to this party every year since I married Doug. If they're kind enough to include me despite the divorce, I'm obligated to attend. Anyway, I found out real quick how many friends I really have in this circle.

DUTCH
How many?

NATALIE
(smiles)
One.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Doug cruises through the room. He's there for a reason. He regards the guests quickly as he passes through. He leaves silence in his wake.

INT. LOGGIA

Dutch puts his arm around Natalie's shoulder.

DUTCH
You're still not ashamed to be at the party with a bum who owns a bunch of cement trucks.

NATALIE
Last year I was here alone. The year before I was with a bum who...

She stops in mid-sentence.

HER POV

Doug's standing in the entrance.

DOUG
Natalie.

CU. NATALIE

She clenches with fear and anger.

NATALIE
(under her breath)
Shit...

INT. LOGGIA

Doug approaches. He offers his hand to Dutch.

DOUG
Doug Standish.

DUTCH
(cautious)
Dutch Dooley.

DOUG
(ignores Dutch)
I didn't expect to see you, Natalie.

NATALIE
Me either. I thought you were in Europe.

DOUG
I'm going out tomorrow.

NATALIE
Does Doyle know?

DOUG
I haven't been able to reach him. You'll be talking to him, you can tell him.
(to Dutch)
Can you excuse us? This is personal.

Dutch looks to Natalie. She nods that it's okay. He gives Doug a cold look and exits.

DOUG
Where the hell did you find him?

NATALIE
Leave him out of this. You can call Doyle and tell him yourself that you can't see him. I'm tired of doing your dirty work.

DOUG
And you can quit bad-mouthing me to my friends.

NATALIE
I didn't say a word...

DOUG
I'm being very nice to you. You have a house to live in, with your truck driver...

NATALIE
He doesn't live at the house.

DOUG
Don't interrupt. You get a monthly check and you have custody of Doyle. You want to screw around, I'll see to it that you lose it all.

NATALIE
I'm sure you will.

DOUG
Bet on it.

NATALIE
You won't call Doyle?

DOUG
I'm not going to look like the bastard in all this. No.

NATALIE
Your animosity towards me aside, he is your son. And for some reason, he still loves you.

DOUG
He knows what side of the family he came from.

NATALIE
He sure does. Anything else?

DOUG
That wraps it up for me. Have a nice holiday.

CU. DUTCH

He watches the conversation from the living room. He steps into the entrance as Doug approaches. He blocks Doug.

DOUG
Excuse me.

DUTCH
I know that what you were saying to Natalie was personal. I understand. I'm involved with her now. So this is personal also. You hurt her and I'll hit you so fuckin' hard your dog'll bleed. Okay?

CU. DOUG

He blanches.

CU. DUTCH

A satisfied grin.

DUTCH
Nice meeting you.

EXT. GEORGIA COUNTRYSIDE. MORNING

Grey rolling hills. Somber, rosy morning sky. A TELEPHONE IS RINGING.

EXT. MCLAREN SCHOOL FOR BOYS

A private boys school. Red brick buildings constructed around a square. THE PHONE CONTINUES TO RING.

INT. DORMITORY. CU. PAY PHONE

RINGING. A BOY grabs it on the second ring. He's thirteen. Mouthful of braces. Handsome despite the indignity of the braces.

BOY
Hello?

EXT. SUBURBAN DETROIT. DUSK

Estate country. A big colonial on five acres.

INT. LIBRARY

Natalie is in the pickled pine panelled library. On the phone. She's in a riding outfit.

NATALIE
May I speak with Doyle Standish, please?

INT. DORM. ROOM

DOYLE STANDISH is cleaning his computer with a mini-vac. He's a sour, arrogant, scowling, 13 year-old boy. HANDEL IS PLAYING on the stereo. The room is spotless. An air-cleaner is running. On his desk chair is a plastic maid's caddy filled with rags, cleaning solutions, polishes and disinfectants. The Boy who answered the phone pokes his head in the room.

BOY
Doyle?

Doyle turns to the Boy. He's annoyed. The way an impatient mother might be with a toddler.

DOYLE
Do you know how to knock?

BOY
Your ma's on the phone.

DOYLE
Do you know how to knock?

BOY
The door was open.

DOYLE
It wasn't open. It was unlocked. Someone from any sort of decent background knocks. And she's not my "Ma". I don't have a "Ma". You may have a ma. I have a mother. Okay?

BOY
(after an angry pause)
You want to take the call, homo?

Doyle's angry at the insult.

DOYLE
I could have you written up for that.

BOY
Yeah? Well, big fuckin' deal.

Doyle crosses to the door and the Boy.

DOYLE
I will have you written-up. Working in the kitchen'll be good for you, Teddy. You can get a taste of what your career at Burger King'll be like.

INT. DORM HALLWAY

Doyle walks the Boy out of the room and closes the door. He locks the door with a key in his pocket.

BOY
What makes you think you're so superior?

DOYLE
I don't have to think.

Doyle struts down the hall like he owns it.

BOY
It's sickening how much you love yourself.

Doyle stops, turns.

DOYLE
I guess it would be to a guy who's enrolled here only because his father's an employee.

Doyle grins, turns and continues down the hall.

CU. BOY

He glares at Doyle's back.

BOY
At least I have a father.

CU. DOYLE

He slows but doesn't stop. The remark clearly affects him.

INT. LIBRARY. NATALIE

She's sitting on the edge of the desk. She smiles.

NATALIE
Doyle? Hi, sweetheart.

INT. DORM. DAY ROOM. PAY PHONE

Doyle's on the phone. No emotion.

DOYLE
What do you want?

CU. NATALIE

This isn't the first time Doyle's been cold toward her. She sighs it off.

NATALIE
I'm calling about Thanksgiving.

CU. DOYLE

No response. No reaction.

CU. NATALIE

She breaks the dead air.

NATALIE
I'd like you to come home.

CU. DOYLE

A shift of his eyes is all the reaction he gives up.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
For the umpteenth time, I'll be with Dad.

ECU. NATALIE

The remark angers, frustrates and saddens her.

NATALIE
Your father's going to be in Europe.

ECU. DOYLE

His eyes widen in alarm and panic. But he says nothing.

INT. LIBRARY

Natalie knows she's hurting Doyle and as bitchy as he is, she tries to be gentle and objective.

NATALIE
I saw him last night. If he made plans, he'll obviously have to break them. Did he call you?

CU. DOYLE

Doesn't answer. He's embarrassed.

CU. NATALIE

She continues.

NATALIE
I'd like you to come home, Doyle.

CU. DOYLE

He turns into the wall for privacy.

DOYLE
So you can get my approval of your new "boyfriend"? To appease your guilt?

CU. NATALIE

She takes offense.

NATALIE
I'm thirty eight years old, I'm your mother and I don't need your approval for anything. Least of all to appease any guilt I don't feel. You're old enough to be objective about me and your father and to understand why we are in the situation we're in. I booked a flight for you on Wednesday. I expect you to be on it.

CU. DOYLE

His temper's rising. He presses tight against the wall.

DOYLE
You're wasting your money.

CU. NATALIE

She's as angry as he is.

NATALIE
I said, I expect you to be on it.

CU. DOYLE

He doesn't like being talked down to.

DOYLE
Forget it. I'm not coming home to spend a holiday with you and whatever you're sharing the house with.

CU. DUTCH DOOLEY

He's rearing back in apprehension, dodging and bobbing, holding reins in his hand.

DUTCH
Calm down, godammit!

CU. HORSE

A high-strung thorough-bred is fighting against the reins and violently throwing his head.

CU. DUTCH

He grits his teeth, yanks down on the reins, and YELLS at the top of his voice.

DUTCH
CUT IT OUT!

CU. HORSE

Shocked into silence.

INT. LIBRARY

Natalie wraps up the phone conversation.

NATALIE
I'm expecting you for Thanksgiving. Mr. Sampson'll help you get on the airplane. I'll see you then.

She hangs up.

INT. DORM. DAY ROOM

Doyle has finished the conversation with his mother. He hangs up the phone and turns into the room. He stops cold.

HIS POV

A dozen BOYS are staring at him. They've listened to his conversation and are smiling at his discomfort.

BOY 2
A little trouble on the home front?

CU. DOYLE

An icy stare.

INT. LIBRARY

Natalie sits on the edge of the desk. She's been hurt and takes a moment to recover. She picks up a framed photo from the desk.

INSERT- PHOTO

Doyle a couple years earlier with a smiling, happy Natalie.

EXT. HOUSE. STABLES

Dutch exits the stable. He's dressed in riding gear. He tugs at his crotch and walks clumsily in his new boots.

DUTCH
(grumbling, to himself)
Recreation my sweet, sore ass. Ninety minutes of ball-slapping humiliation. Pool. What's the matter with pool? It isn't good enough for the rich folks. No, they gotta fly through the fuckin' woods on 2,000 pounds of ignorance...

He clears FRAME. A beat and the horse roars out of the barn and takes off.

ECU. FINGER

Squeezed purple tight. Throbbing hot.

ECU. EMERGENCY SEWING KIT

A one-handed opening of it and the withdrawal of a needle.

ECU. DOYLE

Staring down at his finger with maniacal concentration.

ECU. FINGER

The needle rests gently against the fingertip for a moment. Then it's plunged into the skin, producing a scarlet bud.

CU. FAMILY PHOTO

From a better time. Doyle, his father's arm around his shoulder. Natalie standing on the other side of Doyle, slightly remote and apart. Not by her choice.

CU. DOYLE

He takes careful aim with his bloody finger.

CU. PHOTO. NATALIE

A drop of blood splatters on Natalie's photo.

CU. FIREPLACE

A great, CRACKLING FIRE burns in the fireplace.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Dutch has pulled a big, stuffed chair up to the hearth and sits in it with Natalie across his lap. She's holding his hand, rubbing it, studying it.

DUTCH
You talked to your son?

Natalie nods.

DUTCH
And?

NATALIE
I don't know. I have a ticket for him. But I know he won't use it.
(pause)
His father sees him biannually. Never calls. Never asks. And Doyle worships him.

DUTCH
Boys and fathers. You can't bust 'em up.

Natalie nods. Perhaps he's right.

DUTCH
This probably isn't any of my business yet, but what's he doing in some jerk-off private school? Why isn't he here with you? If I was his age and somebody shipped me off to one of those fairy factories I'd...

NATALIE
It was his choice. He demanded it. He didn't want to stay here. And Doug wouldn't have him. Not in those words. He was diplomatic about it. Of course. He turns his back on Doyle and I get blamed.

DUTCH
Frisbee parents.

NATALIE
Not even. Doyle never stays with Doug. He never did.

DUTCH
His choice?

NATALIE
No. Doug pretends not to date anyone. I see people. I'm with you. Doug plays pure. Doyle thinks I'm the one who walked out on the marriage.

DUTCH
So he's going to think I'm cutting off any hope for a reconciliation between you and Doug.

Natalie shrugs.

DUTCH
I'm not great with the words but you fascinate me and I know as long as I'm with you that you're going to keep doing it. So however high the bullshit piles, I'm here with my shovel.

Natalie lays her head on his shoulder. She appreciates his blunt support.

DUTCH
And I got a beautiful idea.
(pause)
Why don't I fly down, rent a car, pick-up Daryl and drive back?

NATALIE
His name's Doyle. And I don't think that's a great idea.

DUTCH
There's no better way for two guys to get to know each other than spending a couple days in a car.

NATALIE
He can be very rude.

DUTCH
Like I can't? You've slept with me.

NATALIE
(smiles)
He can be abusive.

DUTCH
What else?

NATALIE
Cold.

DUTCH
Brrr.

NATALIE
He's a tough little guy with a big chip on his shoulder. I can't handle him, his father can't handle him...

DUTCH
He's a kid. I know kids. They generally like me. They're not so hard. I can assure you, I've taken on tougher birds than Daryl.
(pause, puzzled)
Dale?

NATALIE
Doyle.

DUTCH
Got it.

INT. PRIVATE SCHOOL. GYM. NIGHT

Doyle's alone in the gym practicing tae kwon do with obsessive fury.

INT. GYM. DOOR

The Boy Doyle insulted earlier is standing in the doorway.

BOY
Doyle!

INT. GYM. DOYLE

Doyle continues his moves. He doesn't look at the Boy.

INT. GYM

The Boy steps into the gym and approaches Doyle.

DOYLE
What do you want?

BOY
My parents wanted to know if since you're not going home, you'd like to come over to our house for Thanksgiving?

DOYLE
I don't think I could handle that much fun.

BOY
Is that a "no"?

Doyle finishes his session and turns to the Boy.

DOYLE
That's a great, big "no". Capital letters with bells and horns.

BOY
Great. It wasn't at all my idea to ask you. I'm glad you don't want to come because I think you're a miserable bastard. Have a nice weekend rotting in your own pissed-off world.

He exits.

CU. DOYLE

His face is hard and angry. It softens as the Boy leaves.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AIRPORT. DETROIT

A dark, somber early winter day.

INT. AIRPORT. PAY PHONE

Dutch is on the phone.

DUTCH
Peggy? It's me. I'm at Metropolitan. I'm flying down to Atlanta to pick up my girlfriend's kid from school. It came up last minute. Will you let Tug and Fritz know that I'll be incommunicado? If anything comes up they should take care of it. I'll be in on Monday. I gotta run. Happy T-Day.

He hangs up the phone and exits. He comes back a beat later and checks the coin return. He finds a quarter.

DUTCH
Lucky coin.

He reaches down and slips off his shoe. He slides the quarter under the insole.

EXT. MCCLAREN SCHOOL

A lone BOY is walking across campus with his FATHER. Otherwise it's deserted and lonely.

INT. DAY ROOM

Doyle's on the phone.

DOYLE
He's supposed to come get me for Thanksgiving.
(angry pause)
This is his son. This is such bullshit. Do you have a number for him?
(another angry pause)
Don't jerk me around, lady. I have a goddamn letter from him saying he's picking me up. If you're lying, I swear to God I'll get you fired. Give me his number in Europe.
(pause)
This is a pay phone. The school's closed for the holiday. He's my father. It's okay if I have his fucking number!
(pause)
GO TO HELL!

He slams the phone down. He picks up a chair and hurls it across the room. It CRASHES into the house TV and SHATTERS the screen.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A black Lincoln Town Car rolls down the highway.

INT. CAR

Dutch is at the wheel. A TAPE IS PLAYING -- YOU CAN NEVER TELL by Chuck Berry. Dutch is trying to sing along, drink coffee and read a map.

INT. DORM. LOBBY

A lone service light is burning. The room's empty.

INT. DAY ROOM

Empty and dark.

INT. BATHROOM

Doyle's brushing his teeth. He spits, rinses his mouth, picks up his towel and dopp kit and exits the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY

It's lit but empty. Doyle comes out of the bathroom and heads down the hall.

INT. DOYLE'S ROOM

Dutch is standing in Doyle's room. He learns what he can from a quick study of Doyle's belongings.

INT. DOYLE'S ROOM. DOOR

Doyle steps into the door. He freezes.

HIS POV

Dutch from the back.

CU. DOYLE

An excited smile.

DOYLE
Dad!

CU. DUTCH

He turns around.

CU. DOYLE

A look of horror. He draws back his dopp kit and fires it at Dutch.

CU. DUTCH

He's smacked in the grinning mug with the kit.

INT. ROOM

Dutch reels back, grabbing his face. Doyle whips open his closet and yanks a golf club out of his bag. He rushes Dutch. Dutch lowers his hands. Doyle bends the club around his body and kicks him in the groin. Dutch doubles over, clutching his crotch and his right arm. Doyle grabs Dutch's overcoat, rips it up over his head and knees him in the face. Dutch collapses to the floor. Doyle opens his desk drawer and pulls out a CO/2 target pistol. He levels it on Dutch.

DOYLE
Stand up!

DUTCH
(groggy)
Son of a bitch...

DOYLE
I said stand up!

Dutch rises slowly. His coat's still over his head.

DOYLE
Hands over your head.

DUTCH
Kiss my ass!

Doyle squeezes off a shot hitting Dutch in the thigh. He shrieks and lunges at Doyle. Doyle gets off another shot, hitting Dutch in the gut. Dutch engulfs Doyle in his coat and knocks him to the ground.

CU. DOYLE

He screams at the top of his voice.

CU. DUTCH

He peels the coat off his head. His nose is bleeding, his lip's split, his hair's standing on end. He has a crazed look on his face.

CU. DOYLE

He screams louder.

DOYLE
DON'T KILL ME!

CU. DUTCH

He'd love to.

DUTCH
Drop the gun!

INT. ROOM

Doyle lets the gun fall from his hand. Dutch stands up. Doyle rises to his elbows.

DOYLE
I'm not alone! There are other people here!

DUTCH
There's nobody here, you little asshole.

Dutch sits down on the bed. He reaches into his pocket for his handkerchief. He holds it to his nose.

DUTCH
Get up!

Doyle scrambles to his feet. He makes a dash for the door. Dutch throws out his foot and clips Doyle's shin, tripping him. He falls to his knees. Dutch grabs him by the collar of his T-shirt and jerks him back.

DUTCH
Sit down!

He kicks Doyle's legs out from under him, landing him on his butt.

DUTCH
I'm a friend of your mother's. I came to get you and bring you home.

CU. DOYLE

He's shocked.

CU. DUTCH

He cleans off his face.

DUTCH
(angrily)
I can feel the pain in my balls behind my eyes.

CU. DOYLE

Knowing he's safe, he puts on his arrogant airs.

DOYLE
Does campus security know you're here?

INT. ROOM

Dutch stares at Doyle.

DUTCH
Can you say "I'm sorry I hit you with a golf club, kicked your face, mashed your nuts and shot you twice?" If that's too much, a simple "hello" would do.

DOYLE
Answer my question.

DUTCH
You can't say that?

DOYLE
Of course I can say it. I choose not to.

Dutch reaches down and picks up the gun. He points it at Doyle.

DUTCH
Now can you?

DOYLE
(hesitates)
No.

DUTCH
Alright. I have to shoot you. Since you might be family someday, I'm giving you the option of taking it on the backside. It won't hurt as bad.

DOYLE
If you shoot me, I'll have you arrested.

Dutch slowly lowers the gun.

DUTCH
Okay. You win.

DOYLE
Clearly. Now, leave.

DUTCH
I told your mother I'd bring you home for the holidays. I sort of sent myself. She said it wasn't a good idea. She may be right.

DOYLE
I have plans.

DUTCH
To stay here? You gonna make a turkey sandwich, watch the football game and hang yourself in the toilet?

DOYLE
I said I have plans. Leave it at that. Now, go.

DUTCH
You're waiting for your Dad?

DOYLE
I don't have to tell you anything.

DUTCH
He's not coming.

DOYLE
You don't know my Dad so shut-up.

DUTCH
I know he's in Europe.

DOYLE
If you won't leave, I will.

Doyle stands up. Dutch raises the gun threateningly. Doyle sits down.

DUTCH
What's a little twerp like you have a gun for?

DOYLE
(haughty)
I shoot game.

DUTCH
With a pellet gun?

DOYLE
Birds.

DUTCH
Pheasant? Quail? Duck?

DOYLE
Among other things.

DUTCH
I'd like to see you pop a duck with this thing.

DOYLE
What's your point?

DUTCH
You have a gun because you're a pissed-off little dude who likes to murder songbirds when the world doesn't turn the way he wants it to.

It's true. Doyle's shocked by Dutch's perception.

DOYLE
Is that a fact?

DUTCH
Only you and your arms supplier know for sure.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
We have a very big problem here.

CU. DUTCH

He leans in close on Doyle.

DUTCH
I suppose we do. I have a problem because I offered to come pick you up. And you have a problem because the last guy that punched me has a dent in his forehead...
(displays his fist and pinkie ring)
...about the size of my pinkie ring and he dribbles when he smiles.

CU. DOYLE

A flash of fear as he watches Dutch proudly examining his ring.

INT. DORM ROOM

Dutch stands up.

DUTCH
Grab your stuff.

DOYLE
Listen one last time.

He stands up and puts himself nose-to-nose with Dutch.

DOYLE
(yells at the top of his voice)
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITH YOU!

EXT. DORMITORY. FRONT ENTRANCE

Dutch kicks the door open. In one hand he's carrying a duffel bag. In the other he's carrying Doyle. He's bound his feet and hands in stereo cables. He's run a hockey stick through the cables and is using it as a handle.

DUTCH
What do you like to do for fun?

CU. DOYLE

He's struggling madly. A pair of underwear is stuffed into his mouth.

CU. DUTCH

Continuing, unfazed.

DUTCH
You like to wiggle and grunt? Me, too.

EXT. LINCOLN

Dutch drops the duffel bag and Doyle behind the car. He fishes out the keys and opens the trunk. He tosses the duffel bag in the trunk.

DUTCH
I'd put you in the trunk but you might die.

He slams the trunk closed and picks up Doyle.

DUTCH
I can't imagine your mother needing a twisted snot like you for anything. I guess it must be a sentimental thing.

He opens the back door.

DUTCH
We'll just store you back here. How's that?

He heaves Doyle into the back seat and closes the door.

DUTCH
There's some bad genetics. Jesus Marie.

He fidgets his sore nuts and gets in the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Highway 85 out of Atlanta. The Lincoln rolls past. I LIKE IT LIKE THAT by Chris Kenner PLAYS ON THE RADIO.

INT. LINCOLN

Dutch is driving, listening to the music. He's perfectly content.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle is lying on his back, his eyes opened wide in rage. He's working on the wadded undies in his mouth.

CU. DUTCH

He glances in the mirror. He adjusts it down so that he can look into the back seat.

DUTCH
You warm enough back there?

He knows he's irritating Doyle.

DUTCH
I owe you an apology. I lost my temper and I shouldn't have. I was a little crazy and wasn't thinking clear so I'm not a hundred percent sure if those undershorts I jammed in your mouth to shut you up were clean or not.

CU. DOYLE

He blows the shorts out of his mouth.

DOYLE
STOP THIS CAR!

CU. DUTCH

He glances back.

DUTCH
I don't know if that's a good idea. I'm on a major highway.

DOYLE'S VOICE
I SAID STOP THIS GODDAMN CAR!

EXT. HIGHWAY

Dutch locks the brakes.

INT. CAR

Doyle slams into the back of the seat and tumbles into the footwell.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Lincoln shudders to a stop. A beat and it pulls onto the shoulder.

CU. DUTCH. UP ANGLE

Looking over the back seat.

DUTCH
You can't beat a Ford for good brakes.

CU. DOYLE

His eyes are squeezed shut in pain. He slowly opens them.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
I'm going to have you prosecuted for this.

CU. DUTCH

Stares.

DUTCH
In big people's court? Or in like a school teen court where if I'm found guilty I have to roll naked in the snow or make a bed with my teeth?

CU. DOYLE

He's not amused. He detests Dutch.

DOYLE
My father is one of the most powerful men in the country.

CU. DUTCH

He mocks the remark with a big, scared face.

CU. DOYLE

He's further incensed by Dutch's mocking him.

DOYLE
When he hears what you did to me, your working class ass'll be grass. You'll be sued into complete and total destitution.

CU. DUTCH

He turns in the seat.

DUTCH
How do you know I'm working class?

CU. DOYLE

He laughs.

DOYLE
From your cheap shoes to your fat stomach to your ridiculous hair style, to your crude vocabulary, to my mother's taste in men...you scream it.

CU. DUTCH

He nods in acknowledgement of the kid's powers of perception.

DUTCH
Is working class bad?

CU. DOYLE

He slumps in the seat and smiles arrogantly.

DOYLE
If you want to get into politics I'll shred you. No, it's not bad. A solid economy needs hand workers.

CU. DUTCH

He's surprised by Doyle's smarts.

DUTCH
I used to drive a cement truck. My father was a brick layer. My mother worked in the laundry at the Pontchartrain Hotel in Detroit.

CU. DOYLE

He sighs with extreme boredom.

DOYLE
You must be very proud.

CU. DUTCH

He nods seriously.

DUTCH
I am.

CU. DOYLE

He considers Dutch's remark. There's something to respect in it. If he didn't loath him so quickly and so completely.

INT. CAR. DUTCH

He smiles.

DUTCH
I still owe you that shot in the ass. You want to get it over with? In case it's gnawing on your mind. Worrying isn't good for the heart or the soul.

He turns in the seat.

DUTCH
You may be the toughest little whacker at the Donald Trump School for Wealthy Peckerheads back there but in my world you're about as worrisome as a cloudy day. I came into this idea, this rotten, stupid idea your mother warned me against, thinking we'd hit it off eventually. Unfortunately, I don't think that's going to happen.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Dutch gets out of the car. He opens the back door and pulls Doyle out. He reaches into his pocket for a penknife, flips it open and cuts the cords binding Doyle's wrists and ankles. Doyle rubs his wrists. Dutch picks up the hockey stick. He reaches into the car with it. Doyle raises his leg to kick Dutch in the ass.

INT. CAR

Dutch has the hockey stick under his arm. He smacks the end with his free hand.

EXT. CAR. DOYLE

From behind him. The hockey stick snaps up, clipping him in the groin. He SCREAMS.

EXT. CAR. DUTCH

He leans out of the car.

DUTCH
Hurts, don't it?

He grabs Doyle by the shirt and gives him a sharp shake.

DUTCH
(dead serious)
Only a pussy takes a pop at a guy when his back's turned. You try it again, you better make sure you finish the job.

He shoves him way. He gets back in the front seat.

DUTCH
Get around in front.

He slams the door and starts the car. Doyle limps around behind the car. As he rounds the rear bumper, he raises his leg and kicks the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY. LATER

The Tennessee River. The Lincoln rolls across the bridge at Chattanooga.

INT. CAR

The RADIO'S OFF. Dutch is driving. Doyle's sitting sullen and silent in the passenger seat. Dutch sneaks a look at him.

DUTCH
You got anything to say?

Doyle doesn't respond. He's looking out the window...

HIS POV

The river, the lights of Chattanooga.

CU. DOYLE

The face of the most distressed boy in the mid-south.

INT. CAR

Dutch continues yacking.

DUTCH
Me? I like to talk. My name's Dutch.

Doyle doesn't respond.

DUTCH
You want to know why they call me Dutch?

No response.

DUTCH
I'm Irish. Not Dutch. So that's not it. And I never stuck my finger in a dyke. Although I've been tempted. And I don't own a paint company or wear wooden shoes. I don't care for chocolate or tulips. So why am I called Dutch?

Doyle looks at him with heavy eyes and exhales a full double lung of air.

DUTCH
It's because when I used to fight in school, I'd swing my arms like a windmill.

Doyle turns away.

DUTCH
I just made that up. It's because of the way my mother used to cut my hair. You got any amusing anecdotes?

DOYLE
I'm living in one right now.

DUTCH
There's some truth there. This is going to be a trip you won't soon forget.

DOYLE
(looks around at Dutch)
Nor will you.

EXT. CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS

The Lincoln winds through the moonlit mountain range.

DUTCH (OC)
I met your Mom about a year and a half ago. Diabetes charity thing. I had a brother who was diabetic so I'm soft on it and got myself on a couple of fund-raising committees.

INT. CAR

Dutch glances at Doyle.

DUTCH
I guess she's got an interest in it, too. Your great grandmother was diabetic. Right?

Doyle shrugs.

DUTCH
You don't know?

Doyle lowers his seat back. He doesn't answer.

DUTCH
She died from it, asshole.

DOYLE
I was an infant.

DUTCH
And you never heard about it?

DOYLE
I don't know much about my mother's side of the quote/unquote "family".

DUTCH
Yeah? Why's that?

DOYLE
Meeting my mother at a charity ball doesn't entitle you to an analysis of my family politics. Okay?

DUTCH
Fair enough.

Doyle shakes his head and snuggles into the seat, turned away from Dutch. Dutch feels momentarily defeated. He continues his conversation.

DUTCH
Anyway, your mom and I hit it off pretty good. We had a few friends in common. Kind, decent, hard-working low-brows, if you will. Not important people. Just nice people.

Doyle looks around at Dutch.

DOYLE
The more you babble the more you reveal yourself as an insecure bastard who's deathly afraid he'll blow his chance at my mother.

He turns back.

DUTCH
(after a pause)
What chance, Daryl?

DOYLE
My name's Doyle and the chance I'm referring to has dollar signs in front of it.

DUTCH
A chance at your Mom's money?

DOYLE
You got it.

DUTCH
You know how much your old man left on the table when he and your mom split up?

DOYLE
Plenty.

DUTCH
You think so?

DOYLE
I know so.

DUTCH
How hard do you want me to correct you?
(pause)
I look like I own a coffee shop but the truth is I got more money than your old man left your mother.

CU. DOYLE

He looks around at Dutch, startled that he has money.

CU. DUTCH

He gives Doyle a wink.

DUTCH
Only trouble is, my dough doesn't count in your neighborhood. 'Cause I worked for it.

He turns his eyes back to the road and laughs.

DUTCH
Working for your money doesn't matter on your side of the world. It's who's crotch the doctor yanked you out of.

CU. DOYLE

He's never heard the truth presented in quite so foul a manner.

DOYLE
You're disgusting.

CU. DUTCH

An impish smile.

DUTCH
You think I'm disgusting? Wait'll you get hungry.

EXT. TRUCK STOP

A big, full-service truck stop outside of Manchester, Tennessee. Not the kind of place that caters to civilians.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

A cheap, tawdry, vinyl and chrome coffee shop jammed with TRUCKERS and TRAVELLERS.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DOYLE

He's flanked by a bear of a MAN in a flannel shirt, jeans and suspenders and a spindly, middle-aged WOMAN who's smoking a 100mm cigarette as she lingers over her coffee. Doyle takes a menu from a holder on the back of the counter. It won't open. He examines it and finds the bottom corner isn't stuck together. He slowly unpeels the two plastic pages. The old lady inadvertently blows a plume of smoke across Doyle's face. The bear jostles him as he reaches across him for the ketchup.

INT. NATALIE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN

Natalie's sitting at the kitchen table with a legal pad, going over her Thanksgiving plans. Gritzi's making a shopping list, taking inventory from the cupboards.

NATALIE
The warm and lovely ex-in laws are planning to drop by tomorrow. To see Doyle. Their goddamn son's in Europe so I have to entertain them. Can you imagine the snit Doyle can throw with his grandparents here?

Gritzi can imagine and doesn't dare say so.

NATALIE
They still hate me for marrying Doug in the first place.

GRITZI
If it's unpleasant, you don't have to have them. It's your home.
(after thought)
Isn't it?

NATALIE
For the time being.
(continues)
I don't need anymore legal headaches from the Standish clan. It's okay. I'll have Dutch with me.

She chuckles.

NATALIE
He'll take about six seconds of Doug Standish, Sr. if he starts in on me.

The PHONE RINGS. Gritzi crosses to the wall phone.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. PAY PHONE. DUTCH

Dutch is on the phone.

DUTCH
(sexy whisper)
Who's going to be kissing your sweet thighs tonight?

CU. GRITZI

She's startled.

GRITZI
Good evening, Mr. Dooley.

CU. DUTCH

A grimace and silent curse.

CU. DOYLE

He looks up from the menu.

HIS POV

A grotesquely made-up middle-aged WAITRESS looks down at him. She's chewing gum, snapping it as LOUD AS GUN SHOTS.

WAITRESS
What'll it be?

CU. DOYLE

He glances down at the menu for a moment, then back up at the Waitress.

DOYLE
What won't make me puke?

INT. RESTAURANT

The Waitress takes the menu from him and looks at it.

WAITRESS
Hmm. How about the frankfurter pie?

INT. KITCHEN. NATALIE

She's on the phone with Dutch.

NATALIE
(with a smile)
I know you're lying.

INT. TRUCK STOP. PAY PHONE. DUTCH

He is.

DUTCH
No. I mean, we're not french kissing yet but we're getting along. We're pounding things out.
(with difficulty)
I kinda like the little guy. He's...unique.
(pause)
We stopped for a bite to eat. I thought I'd call. He's fine. It's a nice clean place.

CU. DOYLE

He's looking at his spoon with distaste.

CU. WAITRESS

She's writing down his order.

WAITRESS
Cheeseburger, no onions, no fingerprints, no hairs, no raw bits of fat and gristle. Fries?

CU: DOYLE

He hands the spoon to the Waitress.

DOYLE
No thank you. There's something on my spoon.

CU. WAITRESS

She takes it from him. She puts on her half-glasses and studies it.

WAITRESS
It's either Jell-O or blood.

She licks it.

WAITRESS
It's not Jell-O.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Lincoln rolls past.

INT. CAR

Dutch is driving. He puts a fresh cigar in his mouth. Doyle is eating a candy bar.

DUTCH
Smoke bother you?

DOYLE
Yes.

DUTCH
Hmm.

He pushes in the lighter.

DOYLE
(after a stare)
Why are you going out of your way to piss me off?

DUTCH
I don't think I am.

DOYLE
You asked if smoke bothered me. I said yes and you pushed in the lighter anyway.

DUTCH
I wasn't asking your permission. I was curious if it bothers you. How was your supper?

DOYLE
I'm eating it now.

Dutch chuckles.

DOYLE
What's so funny?

DUTCH
Nothing.

DOYLE
That I'm having candy for dinner? That's hilarious. What did you have?

DUTCH
I wouldn't eat at a place like that. It was filthy. The busboy was washing vegetables in the men's room.

DOYLE
So why did you tell me to eat there?

DUTCH
I didn't tell you to eat there. You assumed we were stopping to eat. I was stopping for gas and a phone call.

Doyle finishes his candy bar. He shakes his head in disbelief. The lighter pops.

DOYLE
You're asking for it so bad.

Dutch chuckles again. He lights his cigar.

DOYLE
I'm not kidding. You have no idea how serious I can get when I want to screw somebody.

Dutch puts the lighter back.

DUTCH
I'm sure you can do alot of damage. To people who care about you. I'm not so sure you could raise a welt on my ass because I don't frankly care if you live, die or grow mushrooms on your ass. But I guess you're gonna try, huh?

DOYLE
Put money on it.

DUTCH
How much?

DOYLE
Five grand?

DUTCH
I'll do that.

Doyle offers his hand.

DOYLE
Shake on it?

Doyle grabs the cigar lighter, rips it out and stuffs it into Dutch's palm. He SCREAMS.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Lincoln swerves off the road, runs on the shoulder for a hundred yards and stops. Dutch gets out, hustles around to the passenger side, whips the door open...

CU. DOYLE

Truly frightened. He rears back.

EXT. CAR

Dutch rips Doyle out of the car. He heaves him off the road into the darkness. He slams the door and marches back around to the driver's side. He gets in.

INT. CAR

Dutch drops into the seat and slams the door. He sits for a moment, chest heaving, temper pulsing, face red.

DUTCH
Fuckin' kid...

He looks at his hand.

DUTCH
Fuckin' spoiled little shit.
Love ain't worth...

Once he's said what he's said, his temper subsides. He catches his breath.

EXT. FROZEN FIELD

Doyle's running across the choppy frozen field.

DOYLE
GO TO HELL, YOU ASSHOLE!

INT. CAR

Dutch looks out the window.

EXT. FIELD. DOYLE

He slows and stops. He bends down and picks up a clod of dirt. He whips it with all his might.

INT. CAR. DUTCH

He's regained his composure. He feels badly that he's allowed himself to be so violent. The clod of dirt lands on the car roof with a shattering THUNK! Dutch's temper pops again. He whips open the door.

EXT. CAR

Dutch blasts out of the car and looks over the roof.

DUTCH
I DON'T OWN THIS CAR, YOU
JAG-OFF! YOU'RE NOT HURTING
ME!

He ducks a clod of dirt.

EXT. FIELD

Doyle grabs another clod of dirt and winds up.

CU. DUTCH

He rises up.

DUTCH
THROW ONE MORE AND I'LL LEAVE
YOU HERE!

HIS POV

A tiny figure silhouetted in moonlight.

DOYLE
(distant)
PROMISE?!

CU. DUTCH

An angry grin.

DUTCH
GUARANTEED!

EXT. FIELD. DOYLE

He winds up and heaves another clod.

DOYLE
GOOD RIDDANCE, FAT ASS!

He puts his hands on his hips and ducks his head as he catches his breath. When he looks up, he's startled.

HIS POV

The Lincoln is pulling back onto the highway.

CU. DOYLE

A look of complete panic.

DOYLE
Oh, shit...

EXT. HIGHWAY

Into the field. Doyle runs back across the field screaming...

DOYLE
WAIT A MINUTE! STOP! I'LL DIE!

HIS POV.

The red taillights of the Lincoln disappearing down the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY. CU. DOYLE'S SHOES. LATER

Scuffling along the shoulder. CAMERA RISES to reveal Doyle with his hands tucked in his underarms, his coat collar turned up around his ears, his teeth chattering, tears in his eyes. A semi approaches and passes, buffeting him with cold, harsh draft and road grit. He stops and covers his face against the assault.

EXT. MOTEL. LATER

A cheap, independent motel. An office and half a dozen guest cottages. The Lincoln is parked in front of one of the cottages. Dutch is in his undershorts doing deep kneebends. After he finishes, he shakes out his legs and crosses to the window. He peeks outside the curtains.

HIS POV

Nothing but his Lincoln.

EXT. COTTAGE. WINDOW. CU. DUTCH

He's a little concerned. He lets the curtains fall.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE

The lights are out.

INT. DOYLE'S ROOM

Natalie's in her nightclothes. She's looking at his things. The room is as he left it. It's in perfect order. The Standish crest over his bed. Framed photos of Doug Standish, his grandparents, great grandparents. A wall of model sail boats. LaCrosse equipment. Karate trophies. Natalie sits down on the bed. She picks up a tattered Stief monkey resting on the nightstand. She looks at it fondly. It's from a time when Doyle was hers. OC the PHONE RINGS.

INT. HOUSE. HALLWAY

Natalie comes out of Doyle's room and crosses to the master and the phone.

EXT. ROADSIDE REST STOP. PAY PHONE

Doyle's on the phone. He's nervous as his call rings through.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. NATALIE

She picks up the phone.

NATALIE
Hello?

CU. DOYLE

He hears his mother's voice.

NATALIE'S VOICE
Hello?

As much as he doesn't want to, Doyle slams the phone down.

DOYLE
Shit...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Natalie hangs up the phone, curious about the hang-up.

EXT. HIGHWAY. LATER

Doyle's walking on the shoulder with his hands over his ears. A candy bar in one hand. He takes a bite and puts his hand back on his ear. He spots something ahead...

HIS POV

The neon motel sign. The "l" is flickering.

INT. MOTEL COTTAGE. DUTCH

Dutch is on his back, SNORING like a boar. There's a knock on the door. A light TAP. Another light TAP. Then a LOUD BANG! Dutch sits up with a start.

INT. COTTAGE

Dutch stumbles out of bed and hobbles to the door.

CU. DOOR

It opens on Doyle. He's pissed.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
I could have frozen to death,
you asshole.

CU. DUTCH

He grins.

DUTCH
I don't think you would have frozen. Not solid anyway. It's not quite cold enough for that.

INT. COTTAGE

Doyle pushes Dutch aside and comes into the room.

DUTCH
You're welcome.

DOYLE
Shut-up.

He crosses to the beds and lies down on the unopened single.

DUTCH
Here's something you should know about me, Dale. I don't screw around. You piss me off, I react.

Dutch returns to his bed.

DUTCH
I'm not your Dad. I'm not your grampy, I'm not your uncle. I'm a working class nobody who doesn't take shit from kiddies.

He covers himself and settles in.

DOYLE
Where's my bag?

DUTCH
I didn't bring it in. I thought for sure you'd die.

DOYLE
Gimme the keys.

Dutch reaches up on the nightstand and grabs the keys. He flips them on Doyle's bed.

DUTCH
Lock up when you're through.

Doyle picks up the keys and exits.

CU. DUTCH

He breathes a sigh of relief.

DUTCH
What a pain in the ass...

He closes his eyes. A long beat and he hears THE LINCOLN ENGINE TURN OVER. His eyes blast open.

EXT. MOTEL

The Lincoln pulls out of the motel onto the access road making a sharp, unskilled turn.

EXT. MOTEL. COTTAGE

Dutch throws open the door and runs out.

DUTCH
Goddamn it!

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Lincoln slows and turns broadside across the highway. The engine stops. The lights go out.

EXT. HIGHWAY. FURTHER AHEAD

A semi roars down the highway.

CU. TRUCK BUMPER

Alabama plates. NRA stickers.

EXT. TRUCK. FLATBED TRAILER

Loaded with iron pipe.

EXT. MOTEL ENTRANCE

Dutch, in his underwear, overcoat and shoes, stands at the entrance. He sees the Lincoln down the highway. He hears a truck horn.

DUTCH
DOYLE!

He tears down the road to the highway.

INT. SEMI. WINDSHIELD VIEW

The Lincoln is illuminated by the truck's headlights.

EXT. HIGHWAY. OFF RAMP

Dutch races down the ramp.

INSERT. TRUCK BRAKES

A pair of jump boots slam down on the brake pedal.

EXT. HIGHWAY. TRUCK HEADLIGHTS

Fill the frame. The HORN IS BLASTING LONG.

INT. LINCOLN

Looking out the driver's window. The truck bears down on it.

CU. DUTCH

He SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE. He's in terror.

DUTCH

DOYLE!

EXT. HIGHWAY

The truck drives <u>through</u> the Lincoln, shattering it, spinning it off the road in an explosion of glass and metal. The truck grinds to a long stop and pulls off the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DUTCH

He's stopped on the road way. He's white with horror.

EXT. HIGHWAY. TRUCK

A hefty, young DRIVER leaps out of the cab and charges back down the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY. SHOULDER. LINCOLN

What's left of the Lincoln is on its side in a ditch alongside the road. Dutch appears above the rubble. He scrambles down the embankment to the wreck. He looks inside.

DUTCH

DOYLE!

EXT. HIGHWAY. SHOULDER

The Truck Driver runs down the highway to the embankment. He stops as he looks down to the wreckage.

HIS POV

Dutch turns from the Lincoln. He looks up at the Driver.

CU. TRUCK DRIVER

He's puzzled to see a healthy, living man in his undershorts.

TRUCK DRIVER
You okay?

CU. DUTCH

He nods. He's in shock. He starts back up the embankment.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Dutch comes up from the embankment. The Driver helps him up.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Doyle comes up the embankment from the other side. He's serious and composed.

DOYLE
I think this makes us even, Dutch.

CU. DUTCH

Turns. His face twists into an ugly mask of rage. He takes off after Doyle.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A tow truck is pulling the Lincoln onto the highway. Two state police cars are parked on the side of the road. Flares are burning.

EXT. MOTEL. LATER

Another state police car is parked in the lot.

EXT. MOTEL. POLICE CAR

Dutch and the Truck Driver are with two TROOPERS. One is writing a violation. He yanks it off and gives it to Dutch.

INT. MOTEL COTTAGE

Doyle's watching from the doorway.

EXT. POLICE CAR

The Troopers get back in their car. They start their engine and pull out. Dutch pulls out his wallet.

DUTCH
(to the trucker)
Thanks for going along with the story. I appreciate it. The kid's got some emotional problems. He doesn't need police trouble.

Dutch counts out five hundred bucks. He pulls out a business card.

DUTCH
Put that toward any repairs you might need and your lost time. If it's not enough, give me a call. The number's on my card.

The Truck Driver takes the money. He looks back at the motel.

HIS POV

Doyle watching from the open door of the cottage.

CU. TRUCKER

An angry snarl.

TRUCK DRIVER
I hope you choke to death on your turkey, you shithead.

CU. DOYLE

He blanches at the insult from the stranger.

EXT. MOTEL LOT

The Truck Driver exits the lot on foot. Dutch walks back to the cottage. He waves the curious motel guests away.

DUTCH
Show's over. Go to bed.

CU. DOYLE

He smirks as Dutch approaches.

EXT. MOTEL COTTAGE

Dutch walks up to the door and Doyle. He rushes the last few steps and shoves Doyle into the room.

INT. COTTAGE

Dutch slams the door behind him. He's furious.

DUTCH
Listen you little son of a bitch, you could have killed somebody with a stunt like that. That poor bastard was on his way home to see his family! Because you want to play some kind of spoiled brat prank, you put his life in jeopardy. What gives you the right to do that? Huh?

Doyle realizes what he's done. It frightens him.

DOYLE
I didn't think about that.

Dutch shoves Doyle into the wall.

DUTCH
You better start thinking about something else besides your own spoiled ass. I took on this fucking dumb assignment because I love your mother. I gotta wonder how nuts I am. I've met some scum in my life but you beat all, man. You are completely worthless.

He gives him another shove.

DUTCH
This isn't a joke anymore. This is a fucking mission. You're not going to beat me. I served in Vietnam, I've gone one on one with wise guys, I've had my head split open, my nose mashed. I've been kicked and beat and left for dead. There's nothing you've got that'll give me anything more than a nice sweat on my ass. You understand? I'm delivering to your momma, a whipped puppy.

DOYLE
The hell you are.

DUTCH
The hell I am!

Doyle moves away from the wall. Dutch grabs him and slings him back. Doyle puts up his hands.

DUTCH
Get your fuckin' hands down!

Doyle ignores him. He focuses on Dutch, locks eyes with him.

DOYLE
I'm not taking anymore of your shit. Touch me once more and you'll be sorry.

DUTCH
You wanna go? Is that it? I'll go. Shit, I'd love it, man. You wanna go? Get rid of that teenage angst? Get your little peter hard?

DOYLE
Yeah!

Dutch reaches to the nightstand for his wallet and pen. He flips open the wallet and pulls out a business card. He drops the wallet, lifts his leg and writes on the business card using his knee for support.

DOYLE
Come on!

DUTCH
Hold your pony, teen boy.

DOYLE
What're you doing?

DUTCH
A little agreement between us.

He hands the business card and pen to Doyle.

DUTCH
Sign it.

DOYLE
What?

He looks at the card.

INSERT: BUSINESS CARD

"I will not sue Dutch Dooley for physical damages caused by him."

INT. ROOM

Doyle signs the card and hands it and the pen back to Dutch. Dutch drops the card and pen on the bed and puts up his dukes. Doyle returns to his fighting form.

DUTCH
Alright. Let's see if your punch is as big as your mouth. Come on. Give it to me, pipsqueak!

DOYLE
Wait a second.

Dutch drops his hands. He grins.

DUTCH
What?

DOYLE
I want to take my watch off.

DUTCH
Good idea.

Dutch looks down at his wrist and unfastens his watch. Doyle lashes out at Dutch. WHACK! in the face. STOMP! on the instep. KICK! to the belly. PUNCH! in the chops. Dutch topples over like a redwood. Doyle grabs his bag off the bed and goes into the bathroom. He slams the door.

CU. DUTCH

He groans and rolls over. He reaches in his mouth and wiggles his loosened bridgework.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE

A cold rose sun breaches a ragged horizon.

EXT. JUNKYARD

There's frost on the remains of the rented Lincoln.

EXT. DINER

A squatty eat and run adjacent to the motel.

INT. DINER. MORNING

Dutch and Doyle are sitting at the counter. The place is packed with rural FOLKS, holiday TRAVELLERS, low-end ROAD PEDDLERS. Randy Travis is playing on the Seeburg. Dutch is looking at the one page vinyl-covered menu. He has a fresh, unlit cigar in his mouth. Doyle is cleaning his portion of counter with a paper napkin.

DOYLE
How's your face?

Dutch answers after a pause, trying not to let on that it's killing him.

DUTCH
Fine.

DOYLE
A partial apology if I did any permanent damage.

DUTCH
It'll take alot more than you got to do me any permanent damage.

Doyle can't be sure that Dutch is telling the truth. He's looking to get a rise out of him.

DUTCH
(looking up from the menu)
Your mother's hinted that she'd like me to lose a little weight. But flapjacks and bacon on a cold morning can be pretty sexy.

Doyle stares at him. He hasn't a clue what he means.

DUTCH
You get another twenty years under your belt and you'll start viewing sex and food as interchangeable pleasures.

He returns to the menu.

DOYLE
While we're on the subject, I want you to know that I could have kicked you in the groin.

DUTCH
(nods, still engrossed in the menu)
Yeah? Why didn't you?

DOYLE
I would have made you sterile.

Dutch snorts.

DOYLE
Seriously. I'm a high brown belt.

Dutch sets the menu down.

DUTCH
Yeah? Do you box?

DOYLE
Kickbox?

DUTCH
Box box.

Doyle shakes his head, no.

DUTCH
Next time, we go at it, we'll box. The Marquis' rules. No sissy kicks, no geometry, no kamakazi shit. No sucker punches. Good old American street fighting.

DOYLE
Whatever tactics a man can deploy in a fight is fair provided the sole objective is to win.

DUTCH
Okay. I'll use a little length of lead pipe. And you can have a rolled-up newspaper.

DOYLE
That's not what I meant.

DUTCH
It is what you meant. Civilization is rules. The jungle is whatever gets you what you want. You live in the jungle.

DOYLE
Which is your way of admitting that I can whip you.

It could be true. Dutch flips the menu over and looks at the backside.

DOYLE
Your working class ego can't handle a kid of wealth and position beating you up.

DUTCH
My working class ego can handle that and a whole lot more.

DOYLE
Then you do admit I can beat you in a fight?

DUTCH
(after a pause)
Why don't you shut-up? I'm taking off my watch and you pop me. That's not a fight. That's a mugging.

DOYLE
I beat you mentally, then I beat you physically.

DUTCH
Yesterday you didn't have a thing to say. Today you're a fucking parrot.

Dutch catches the attention of a passing waitress.

DUTCH
I'm ready here...

A buxom, chesty WAITRESS in a low-cut pink poly uniform acknowledges Dutch with a wink.

DOYLE
For a split second last night, I sort of respected you. For how you handled the cops and the accident. But I see that my initial impression was correct. You're a clod.

He picks up the menu. Dutch glares at him.

DOYLE
And the cool part is, I can say that and you can't do anything about it because I can kick your ass.

He grins.

DUTCH
I won't cop to that but I will say this. There's one thing that I can do that you can't.

DOYLE
What?

DUTCH
I can pay for my breakfast.

Doyle is reminded that he doesn't have any money. The Waitress strolls over. She pulls her pad out of her apron and her pen out of her cleavage.

WAITRESS
What're y'all hungry for this cold morning?

DUTCH
The number six for me. And a glass of water for my parrot.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE. MORNING

A cold rain is falling. The PHONE RINGS OVER.

INT. NATALIE'S KITCHEN

Gritzi and Natalie are unloading shopping bags from the market.

NATALIE
That'll be Dutch. I'll bet they're in Ohio.

Natalie grabs the phone.

NATALIE
Hi, honey.

A look of shock comes over her face. She looks to Gritzi.

NATALIE
(cold)
What do you want? I thought it was somebody else, trust me. Why aren't you in Europe?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

A Mercedes two seater whips down the country lane.

INT. CAR. CU. DOUG STANDISH

He's alarmingly handsome and urbane.

DOUG
I didn't like the weather this morning. I didn't want to take off in it. Have you talked to Doyle?

INT. KITCHEN. NATALIE

Natalie grits her teeth angrily and mouths to Gritzi, "bastard".

NATALIE
He's on his way home. Yeah, he's flying.

INT. CAR

Doug and his girlfriend, GRACE. She's twenty two, raven-haired, empty and arrogant. Staring out the window with deliberate vacuousness.

DOUG
I'd like to stop by. I know my parents'll be there.

CU. NATALIE

She's furious and feels invaded and manipulated.

NATALIE
I can tolerate them, but I don't want you here. It won't help Doyle to know you lied to him.

CU. DOUG

He takes immediate offense.

DOUG
I didn't lie to him. You did.

CU. GRACE

She looks over at Doug. Bored. Annoyed that he's on the phone.

CU. NATALIE

She doesn't want to lose it on the phone.

NATALIE
You wouldn't do that. I know you're sick but not that sick.

CU. DOUG

A snotty smirk. The same smirk we've seen on Doyle.

DOUG
What difference does it make? You can't raise him. He doesn't respect you. He'll never respect you.

CU. NATALIE

The tears come.

NATALIE
If I knew he'd be better off with you, I'd give him up. That's the difference between me and you. You want him because he's family property. And you're right. He doesn't respect me. He doesn't respect anybody because his entire life he's never had anybody he could look up to.

CU. DOYLE

He's seated, looking up.

HIS POV

Dutch is standing next to him. He's cleaning his teeth with a toothpick. He looks down.

DUTCH
Nothing burps better than bacon.

He gives Doyle a wink.

DUTCH
Your water looked tasty. Was it good?

EXT. HIGHWAY. WIDE

From across the highway we see Doyle sitting on Dutch's suitcase. His duffel is at his feet. Dutch is standing at the side of the roadway. With great show and style, Dutch holds out his arm and pulls up his sleeve an inch.

CU. DUTCH'S HAND

Arm and hand extended. Fingers outstretched, thumb standing erect. One by one he curls his fingers into his palm making a hitcher's sign.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DOYLE AND DUTCH

Dutch holds his arm out as a car streaks past.

DOYLE
You're insane. Do you have any idea how dangerous it is to hitchhike?

DUTCH
You have a high brown belt. What're you worried about?

DOYLE
You're an idiot.

DUTCH
You have a better way to get home?

DOYLE
We're not without means for God's sake.

DUTCH
We are at the moment. We have twenty bucks.

DOYLE
You ever heard of a telephone? Call my mother. I'll call my grandfather. Jesus...

DUTCH
Someday you're going to get into a situation where you won't be able to call for help. You'll have to rely on yourself. And you'll let yourself down. I'm not calling because I don't want your mother to think we can't make it home on our own. Call it male pride. Old-fashioned, pig-headed, working-class, pre-fax machine/car phone masculine pride. No lawyers, no accountants, no mommies, no daddies, no Washington lobbyists. Just a man and his wits.

DOYLE
That's helpful when we're face-down dead in a ditch.

DUTCH
(nods)
That's part of it, too. But you roll the dice and take what you get.

A truck blasts by.

DUTCH
We're not doing too good here. You want to give it a try? You're alot cuter than me. No lonely road jockey's going to get too hot thinking about me sitting next to him.

CU. DOYLE

A horrifying thought.

CU. DUTCH

He sneaks a look back at Doyle. He knows exactly what he's doing.

EXT. HIGHWAY. LATER

A commercial passenger bus rolls down the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DUTCH AND DOYLE

Dutch is stomping his feet and slapping his arms at his sides to keep the blood flowing to his extremities. Doyle is hunched over to keep warm. He looks up and around.

HIS POV

The motel. They haven't moved.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Doyle looks at his watch. A string of five cars blow by. Dutch steps into his hitcher move and waggles his thumb at the passing vehicles.

DOYLE
Let me know when your working-class male pride freezes and falls off. I'll call my mother and tell her to charter a plane for us. After they take me back to school, they can take you back home.

DUTCH
That's not going to happen any time soon.

He sneaks his hand into his overcoat and clutches his balls to double check that he still has feeling. A couple of trucks roar by.

DOYLE
I know this is a big exercise. Teach the lad a lesson and all that crap.

DUTCH
(turning to Doyle)
If it was a lesson, which it isn't, would that hurt you?

DOYLE
Only if I die of exposure.

Dutch looks at his thumb. He wiggles it to make sure it's still functional. A run of three trucks rolls past.

DUTCH
Remember this, asshole. If you hadn't destroyed the car, we'd be riding in comfort at a high rate of speed.

DOYLE
Face it. You're not any good at this, are you?

A block of ten passenger cars streak by.

DOYLE
(yelling above the highway noise)
Travelling the highways and byways! You're into the romance of it! But you can't pull it off, can you?!

CU. DUTCH

There's more than a little truth to Doyle's comment. The cars pass. It's quiet. Dutch turns to Doyle.

DUTCH
I'm a sixties guy. Rambling was a way of life. This is gingersnaps for me.

CU. DOYLE

He knows Dutch is lying.

DOYLE
Three hours and we've moved twenty yards?

CU. DUTCH

It's true. Dutch clears his throat to cover his embarrassment.

DUTCH
You're a nineties kid. Everything has to happen in a nanosecond. The road knows no clocks, junior. You know about King Arthur?

EXT. HIGHWAY

Doyle doesn't get the connection.

DOYLE
Quite a bit, actually.

DUTCH
You do? Okay. Avalon. You know that?

DOYLE
Very well.

DUTCH
You look for it. You don't find it?

DOYLE
Right. It finds you. So what?

DUTCH
That's the luck of the rambling man. You look for it, you don't find it. You wait long enough...

OC a horn BLOWS. Dutch and Doyle look around.

THEIR POV

The commercial bus pulls off the side of the road.

CU. DUTCH AND DOYLE

Dutch looks at Doyle with a smirk.

DUTCH
Like I said...

DOYLE
How are you going to pay for it?

EXT. BUS

A SERVICE MAN gets off the bus. Dutch greets him with a smile.

DUTCH
Happy holiday, son.

The Service Man smiles. Dutch allows Doyle to board first.

INT. BUS

Doyle steps aside as Dutch boards. The gruff, humorless BUS DRIVER looks them up and down.

DRIVER
Yeah?

DUTCH
We're on our way to Detroit.

DRIVER
I don't take on passengers off the road. This is an armed forces charter.

DUTCH
I'm a vet myself.
(refers to the door)
Can you close the door.

DRIVER
As soon as you get off my bus.

DUTCH
Can we make a deal?

DRIVER
Off the bus.

DUTCH
Twenty bucks.

DRIVER
(lowers his voice)
I wouldn't run you over for less than a hundred.

DUTCH
(to Doyle)
Show the man your watch.

DOYLE
What?

DUTCH
Show it to him!

INT. BUS

The PASSENGERS are leaning into the aisle and looking over the tops of the seats watching the negotiation. They're all uniformed Army personnel of both sexes and all races.

CU. EXPENSIVE MEN'S SPORTS WATCH

On Doyle's wrist.

INT. BUS

Doyle takes his wrist back from the Driver.

DUTCH
And the twenty bucks.

DRIVER
I only go as far as Louisville.

DUTCH
(to Doyle)
Give the man your watch.

Doyle looks at Dutch like he's lost his mind.

DOYLE
This is a five hundred dollar watch.

DUTCH
Do you have a better idea?

DOYLE
(taking his watch off)
I hate your guts.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The bus pulls back on the highway.

INT. BUS. LATER. CU. BLACK SOLDIER

Young, big, close fade hair cut. Blaster in his lap. A HOUSE MIX ROARING. He's staring.

HIS POV

Doyle is sitting next to him. He knows he's being watched. He's nervous. Looking at the Soldier out of the corner of his eye.

CU. DOYLE

He's scared to death. He glances across the aisle.

HIS POV

Two more SOLDIERS. The one on the aisle is a white mountain kid. The one in the window seat is black. They're looking at Doyle. The White Soldier leans over and looks down at Doyle's shoes.

WHITE SOLDIER
What'd you pay for them BK's?

INT. BUS. DOYLE

He tucks his feet in.

DOYLE
I don't know.

WHITE SOLDIER
You steal them?

DOYLE
I charged them.

WHITE SOLDIER
What?

DOYLE
I have an account at several stores in the town where I go to school.

The Soldier stares. He doesn't understand.

DOYLE
Charge accounts. I go in, get what I need and the bill is sent to my parents. Like charge cards. You have charge cards?

The Soldier stares.

DOYLE
You've heard of Discover and Visa and American Express.

WHITE SOLDIER
Yeah.

DOYLE
It's like that. Sort of. It's a credit arrangement.

WHITE SOLDIER
So, how'd you pay for the shoes?

DOYLE
(to the guy next to him)
Do you understand what I'm saying?

SOLDIER WITH BLASTER
You used your American Express card.

DOYLE
No. It's like an American Express card.

SOLDIER WITH BLASTER
You paid for the shoes?

DOYLE
My father's accountant paid for them.

WHITE SOLDIER
A gift?

DOYLE
No. It's my father's money. Do you know what an accountant is?

WHITE SOLDIER
Yeah...

DOYLE
We have one.

WHITE SOLDIER
For what?

DOYLE
Financial matters. He pays the bills, does the taxes. Stuff like that.

WHITE SOLDIER
The accountant bought you the shoes?

Doyle gives up. He nods.

DOYLE
For my birthday.

SOLDIER WITH BLASTER
They're fly.

DOYLE
Thank you very much.

WHITE SOLDIER
What size are they?

DOYLE
Nine.

The Soldier leans back.

WHITE SOLDIER
What size are you?

BLACK SOLDIER
Nine.

WHITE SOLDIER
(to Doyle)
You want to sell 'em?

CU. DOYLE

He's scared. He doesn't know how to answer.

INT. BUS. DUTCH

He's a few seats back from Doyle next to a young female HISPANIC SOLDIER. She's very pretty.

GIRL
Is that your son up there?

DUTCH
No. My girlfriend's kid. I'm bringing him up to Detroit from a private-school he goes to in Georgia.

GIRL
You're hitching rides?

DUTCH
We ran into a little trouble. We lost the car. So, we're bummin' home.

He smiles at the reminder of what's gone down so far.

DUTCH
You got kids?

GIRL
A daughter. She's with my mother.

DUTCH
You going to see her?

The Girl nods.

DUTCH
Little?

GIRL
Three.

DUTCH
That's gotta be nice.

GIRL
When I finally get stationed somewhere, she'll come and live with me.

DUTCH
You divorced?

GIRL
Never married.

DUTCH
I was married. Once. Briefly.

GIRL
No kids?

Dutch shakes his head.

DUTCH
No. Do I regret it? Yes. I do.

GIRL
You're not so old. You could still have kids.

DUTCH
My Dad was forty seven when he had me. He was like a grandfather. I don't think it's in my cards to have kids. Especially after spending the last 18 hours with that one up there.

INT. BUS. DOYLE AND THE SOLDIERS

He's looking at a thick gold chain.

DOYLE
Thank you, no. I don't wear much jewelry.

WHITE SOLDIER
Try it on.

Doyle reluctantly puts the chain over his head. The Soldiers crack up.

BLACK SOLDIER
Give it back.

Doyle quickly removes the chain and hands it to the White Soldier who hands it to the Black Soldier.

WHITE SOLDIER
I don't know what we're gonna do, man. My friend really, really wants those shoes.

DOYLE
I'm a long way from home. I need my shoes. I'm sorry.

WHITE SOLDIER
I got an idea.
(to the black soldier)
Where's your bag, man?

CU. DOYLE

He's worried.

EXT. LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

On the banks of the Ohio. The beauty shot. Sunset.

EXT. BUS STATION

The bus is unloading. Soldiers step down, shaking the kinks out of their legs and backs and butts.

CU. BUS DOOR

A pair of extremely pointed, worn and battered, light tan loafers with gold buckles STEP INTO FRAME. CAMERA RISES to reveal a pissed-off Doyle. Dutch steps down behind him and pats him on the shoulder.

DUTCH
We're moving now, huh?

INT. BUS STATION. PAY PHONE

Dutch is on the phone again. The bus station is loud and crowded.

DUTCH
Everything's going great. We're taking our time. Seeing the country.

INT. LIBRARY

Natalie's behind the desk.

NATALIE
I don't want to sound ungrateful, Dutch, but don't you think you should just drive straight in. You could hit snow...

INT. BUS STATION

Dutch tucks into the booth to avoid the noise.

DUTCH
Let me tell you something. Your son is a tough bird. I'm not knocking you but he's got his nose up in the air something fierce.

INT. LIBRARY. CU. NATALIE

She tightens instinctually at the frank remark.

NATALIE
He's been through more than a little. And you showing up to drive him home against his will...you're not going to see anybody's best side under those conditions. Don't play father with him, please. Just bring him home.

CU. DUTCH

He realizes he has to be a little more tender.

DUTCH
I get it, Nat. It's okay. I'm just saying he's a little sheltered from the real world and he's got a bit of an attitude about regular people. It's not my place to do anything about it. I'm just saying we're having an adventure and I don't think it's going to hurt him to see things he's never seen before.

INT. BUS STATION. MEN'S ROOM. CU. DOYLE

He has a tooth brush in his mouth. He's staring in alarm.

HIS POV

An ELDERLY MAN, in a sleeveless undershirt, is bathing at a sink. He's mopping his underarms with a paper towel. He looks at Doyle and smiles.

ELDERLY MAN
Getting hungry for your turkey dinner?

CU. DOYLE

He'd like to vomit.

CU. ELDERLY MAN

He wads up the towel and tosses it in the trash bin. He looks down.

ELDERLY MAN
Hey! What do you know!

He points to Doyle's feet.

CU. DOYLE

He looks down.

HIS POV

The Elderly Man is wearing the same shoes as Doyle.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOUISVILLE. HOLIDAY INN

Doyle is standing just outside the parking lot entrance. He's holding a piece of cardboard with the word "Detroit" written on it.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE HOLIDAY INN

Dutch is sitting on the edge of a city plant box.

DUTCH
Look at me! Dale!

Doyle looks at Dutch. He's angry.

DUTCH
Is that your most pathetic look?

DOYLE
This is my death to you look.

DUTCH
That won't get us a ride. Be pathetic. Try it. Pretend you don't have ten million bucks waiting for you when you're twenty-one.

DOYLE
So I'm pathetic and I'm at a motel. What's this do for us?

DUTCH
Everybody that's staying there is from somewhere else. You want to go stand on the expressway? And remember, I'm your Dad and I have a bad heart.

DOYLE
You have no plan do you?

DUTCH
A rough outline.

DOYLE
Actually, I'm the idiot. I'm going along with it.

DUTCH
And you will continue to. Because I figured something out. You won't call your mother and ask for help for all of your sick, twisted Oedipal reasons.

DOYLE
Oedipus has nothing to do with this.

DUTCH
Whatever it is. And you won't call your grandfather because he'll eat his way to your brain from your shorts up for getting into this situation. Right?

DOYLE
Wrong.

DUTCH
Bullshit, I'm wrong.

DOYLE
I'm not calling my grandfather because there's a very good chance he won't take my call.
(pause)
You weren't even close.

CU. DUTCH

He's surprised by Doyle's honesty.

DUTCH
I'm glad you're being honest.

CU. DOYLE

Anything but.

DOYLE
I'm not being honest. I'm just trying to look pathetic.

EXT. MOTEL. PARKING LOT

A pair of young women, CALLIE HELSTROM and BROCK WARSHALK are getting into their Firebird. They're in their early twenties, attractive in a cheap way, overtly sexy, made-up, moussed-up, wearing cheap fur. Something catches Callie's eye. Brock sees Callie looking. She looks.

THEIR POV

Doyle standing in the entrance of the parking lot with his sign, his face turned up.

CU. CALLIE

A look of enormous sympathy. She looks to Brock.

CALLIE
Is that sad? He's a baby.

CU. BROCK

She nods.

BROCK
He's going to Detroit. You want to talk to him?

EXT. PARKING LOT

Callie calls to him.

CALLIE
Kid?

CU. DOYLE

He sniffles and looks to the women.

HIS POV

The two women wave to him.

CALLIE
We're going to Toledo. You want to come along?

CU. DOYLE

He smiles.

EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT

The Firebird streaks down the highway.

INT. CAR

Callie's driving. Dutch is in the front seat. Brock and Doyle are in the back seat. MUSIC'S PUMPING.

DUTCH
You on a vacation or something?

Callie looks in the mirror at Brock. She cracks a smile.

CALLIE
We're going home to Toledo for the holidays. Both of our families are there.

DUTCH
We're headed home ourselves.

CALLIE
You got a nice kid.

DUTCH
Yeah.

He looks over the seat at Doyle. He winks to irritate him.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle sneers at Dutch. He's sitting next to Brock. The small seat forces them to touch at the shoulder. Brock looks at him with a smile.

BROCK
How old are you?

DOYLE
Thirteen.

BROCK
(fond smile)
Nice age.

DOYLE
Nice to have been. Not so nice while you're in it.

BROCK
No? I loved it back then. Everything was possible.

DOYLE
(looking at Dutch)
I know what you mean.

BROCK
(lowers her voice)
Is your Dad going to be okay?

DOYLE
Huh?

BROCK
His heart.

DOYLE
Oh. Right. I hope so.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie picks up the conversation.

CALLIE
So, what's the word on you two?

DUTCH
What do you mean?

CALLIE
Are you drifters?

DUTCH
More or less.

CU. DOYLE

He's revolted at the notion.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie nods. She knows a few.

DUTCH
How about you?

CALLIE
(looking in the mirror)
Brock?

BROCK
Yeah?

CALLIE
Dutch wants to know what we do.

DUTCH
I don't mean to be nosey. It's not important. I'm just making conversation.

BROCK
Tell him. Who cares?

CALLIE
(to Dutch)
We're call girls.

CU. DUTCH

He turns slowly to Callie. He tries to mask his shock.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle looks at Brock. She smiles.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie leans over and whispers.

CALLIE
I didn't want to say prostitute in front of the boy.

DUTCH
I appreciate that.

CALLIE
We were down in New Orleans at the Super Dome for the Housewares Convention.

Dutch nods politely.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle's looking at Brock.

BROCK
We also do a little dancing.

DOYLE
Naked?

Brock looks to the front seat. She doesn't know if she should answer.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Dutch grimaces. He looks at Callie. She'll take care of it.

CALLIE
It's okay. I have a little brother.
(to Doyle)
Just on top, sweetie.

She smiles at Dutch. He's sweating.

CALLIE
(whispers)
We go all the way but he doesn't need to know that.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Firebird blows past.

INT. CAR

Dutch is asleep. Callie's still driving. She's smoking, LISTENING to the RADIO. She glances over at Dutch. At his groin.

HER POV. CU. DUTCH'S CROTCH

His hand is over his crotch. The nice diamond pinkie ring on his finger. The hand moves. CAMERA GOES WITH IT.

CU. CALLIE

She wants the ring. Her eyes dart from the road to Dutch's hand.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle's talking to Brock.

DOYLE
Your parents know and they haven't disowned you?

BROCK
Not so far.

DOYLE
Don't you think that's amazing?

BROCK
Not really. I make a living. Maybe it's sick, maybe it's not. I'm honest about it. And I don't hurt anybody. Not on purpose.

DOYLE
You don't think it hurts your parents?

Brock thinks. Maybe it does.

BROCK
Eventually, if you live long enough, you're going to hurt your parents somehow.

DOYLE
Yeah, but...it's none of my business.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie reaches out and grabs Dutch by the shoulder. She gently pulls him toward her...

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Looking out the front. Like a corpse, Dutch keels over against her. She bangs into the door from the impact.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT. CU. CALLIE

Dutch's head is on her shoulder. He's pointing his open mouth at her. She leans away from it with distaste. She steers with her knees and uses both hands to try and peel the ring off his finger. It's stuck tight.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Brock and Doyle continue their conversation. Oblivious to what's going on in front.

BROCK
Do you get along with your Dad?

DOYLE
(hesitates)
That guy's not my Dad. He's my mother's boyfriend.
(aside)
I hate saying that. It's so sick.
(continues)
He's bringing me home for Thanksgiving break. I go to a private school down south.

BROCK
You were lying about his heart?

DOYLE
That was his lie. Listen, don't judge me by him. I hate his guts.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT. CU. CALLIE

She has Dutch's finger in her mouth, soaking it. He giggles in his sleep. She pulls the finger out. She tugs on it.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Firebird slams through a puddle on the road shoulder.

INT. CAR. CU. CALLIE

She jerks the car back on the road. She looks down at Dutch to make sure he hasn't awakened. She continues working on the ring. She puts it in her mouth and tries to suck it off. She glances in the mirror.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle and Brock continue.

DOYLE
He's trying to get to know me because I think he's planning on marrying my Mom.

BROCK
There's something wrong with that?

DOYLE
I'm not too crazy about my mother to begin with and he's just a slob. The less I know, the better.

BROCK
He seems to be going through alot of shit to get you home.

DOYLE
It's on purpose. He's got this ridiculous plan to drag me around until I break. Like I'm a horse. He's got a shock coming, though. I don't break.

BROCK
What's wrong with your mom?

DOYLE
She divorced my Dad for starters.

BROCK
It takes two to make a thing go bad.

DOYLE
She didn't make it work.

BROCK
Maybe it's just easier to blame her. Did she get custody?

DOYLE
For the time being.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie reaches around Dutch to the footwell and her purse. In the effort, Dutch slips down her body ending up face down in her crotch. He lets out a LOUD, PORKISH SNORT. Callie jumps. She can't do anything about his snoring into her groin. The further she leans forward, the harder he presses his face into her. She snatches her purse. She gently eases Dutch out of her lap and lays him back on her shoulder. Driving with her knees she opens her purse. She glances between the purse and the road as she rummages through the purse. She finds a hotel size squeeze bottle of hand lotion. She flips open the lid with her teeth. She holds his finger out and points the squirt bottle at it. It doesn't come at first. She squeezes a little harder. Nothing. She grits her teeth and lets the bottle have it. The flow is unloosed with a WET BURP and a healthy blob is jet-fired out of the tube.

CU. DUTCH

The blob of hand lotion splatters against the back of his throat. Not a drop on his lips or teeth. A clean tonsil shot. He SNORTS, GAGS, COUGHS and SWALLOWS.

CU. CALLIE

She's startled.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT

Callie quickly pushes Dutch back on his side. She looks in the rear view mirror. She dumps the lotion bottle in her purse. She looks at Dutch.

HER POV

He's SNORING gently as if nothing ever happened.

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Brock and Doyle continue. Brock takes Doyle's hand. He shivers.

BROCK
My childhood was a nightmare.

DOYLE
I'm sorry to hear that.

He takes her hand.

BROCK
My youth was a forest fire. Things aren't the greatest now but I'm going home and I'm sitting at the same table with my family. And it'll be okay. No matter what they do or what I do. Family first. I know I believe that stronger than they do and I understand why but still, I'm welcome. Maybe you oughta quit knocking your mother and figure out a way to make it work with her.

Doyle's entirely impressed with Brock.

DOYLE
That won't happen but I really like talking to you.

BROCK
(with a laugh)
Not too many harlots at your school, huh?

DOYLE
No girls at all.

BROCK
Maybe I'll come down and visit you sometime.

DOYLE
That would be excellent.

INT. CAR. FRONT SEAT. CALLIE AND DUTCH

She's watching the conversation in the back seat. She glances over at Dutch. He's still out cold, SNORING. His suitcoat is open. Callie reaches out slowly, snakes her hand into his suitcoat and lifts his wallet.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Firebird disappears into the dark.

EXT. TRUCKSTOP. GAS PUMPS. LATER

The Firebird pulls into the station and stops at the pumps.

INT. CAR. DUTCH

He wakes up. He looks around to see where he is. He has a terrible taste in his mouth.

INT. CAR. CALLIE

She turns in the seat.

CALLIE
Brock?
(she shifts her eyes to Dutch)
You want to wake up your little friend? So he can stretch his legs?

INT. CAR. BACK SEAT

Doyle's asleep on Brock. His head is on her chest. She gently wakes him. He lifts his sleepy head revealing a huge wet drool mark on Brock's left bosom.

BROCK
Let's go for a walk.

DOYLE
I was just dreaming about that.

EXT. CAR

Dutch opens the door and gets out. He shakes his right leg -- it's asleep. The bad taste still puzzles him. Brock gets out his side. Callie gets out. Doyle gets out her side. He stumbles, catches himself.

DOYLE
(slipping on his coat)
What time is it?

CALLIE
It's a little after ten.

DUTCH
I'll drive the next shift.

CALLIE
I'm fine. Would you do me a favor, though? Could you go inside and get a map? I want to make sure I don't get screwed-up.

DUTCH
Sure. We got time for a bite to eat?

CALLIE
Yeah. I'll do this and meet you inside.

DUTCH
Sure. Dobie? Let's go.

DOYLE
I'll come in with Brock.

BROCK
Go ahead, babe. I have to get something out of my bag. I'll meet you inside.

Dutch limps on his sleeping leg to the restaurant adjacent to the station. Doyle follows reluctantly.

BROCK
(to Callie)
What?

CALLIE
I lifted the toad's wallet.

BROCK
(disappointed)
Why?

CALLIE
Because it was there.

BROCK
I was just getting to feel respectable.

CALLIE
That's what old age is for.

INT. RESTAURANT

Dutch walks in with his hand up under his shirt. He's scratching his lower back. Doyle catches up to him.

DOYLE
Let's not waste alot of time eating, okay? I want to get back in the car and keep moving.

Dutch slides into a booth at the window. Doyle sits across from him.

DUTCH
Don't put the flag up yet. These gals are pros. I got half a mind to refuse the rest of the ride.

DOYLE
No way.

DUTCH
You know what your mother would say if she knew what you were doing?

DOYLE
You refuse the ride, I'll tell her. In detail.

DUTCH
You really are a fuckin' hypocrite.

DOYLE
Why?

DUTCH
A couple of hookers, 'cause they got a set of rockets, they're okay but anybody else at their station in life is scum.

DOYLE
That's not true.

DUTCH
Bull....shit. We're riding together in the back from now on. What that missile twister can teach you, you don't need to know till you're in prison.

DOYLE
I'll decide what I need to know. And she's not like that. She listens.

DUTCH
That's her job, you asshole. She smiles and listens and makes men feel like they're stuffed full of manure. This is a ride. Nothing more. I'm glad you're seeing another side of the human race but don't drown in it.

A tubby, sleepy WAITRESS shuffles over.

WAITRESS
Yup?

DUTCH
(indicating to the window)
We're waiting on a couple more out in the car.

The Waitress walks away. Dutch glances out the window.

HIS POV

The gas pumps. No Firebird.

CU. DUTCH

He slaps his suit coat pocket.

DUTCH
Shit!

CU. DOYLE

He doesn't get it. He stares out the window.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Dutch stomps out. Doyle follows.

DUTCH
Goddamn it! Goddamn it! Goddamn it!

DOYLE
I can't believe it.

DUTCH
Believe it! Your angel with the dirty wings flew. With my wallet, my luggage, your luggage and half of my last cigar. Shit!

DOYLE
She was so understanding about my problems.

DUTCH
Fuck your problems!

DOYLE
Fuck your problems!

DUTCH
You're my only problem!

DOYLE
I'm your problem?

DUTCH
If you hadn't destroyed the car...

DOYLE
I was brushing my teeth in my dorm bathroom when you dropped in and abducted me! Don't blame me for anything. Blame yourself.

DUTCH
If you weren't such a spoiled son of a bitch, such a whinney little shit, I wouldn't have had to come for you. I did this to get to know you. To get to like you. I actually hoped that you'd like me.

DOYLE
I never did. I never will. Ever.

DUTCH
Good. Because I wouldn't want any kind of consideration from you.

DOYLE
You won't get any.

DUTCH
You go on being a little dick. You go on believing your blueblood fantasies. I could care fuckin' less.

DOYLE
You asked for it. You got it. It's not my fault.

DUTCH
True. It's your mother's fault.

DOYLE
Why's it her fault?

DUTCH
She gave birth to you.

DOYLE
What about your mother?

DUTCH
She's a saint.

DOYLE
What for? Having puppies?

Dutch gives Doyle a hard shove. Doyle jumps on the defensive.

DOYLE
You want some more?

DUTCH
Yeah. As a matter of fact.

DOYLE
Come and get it.

Dutch waves him off and walks away.

DOYLE
Chicken?

Dutch turns suddenly and kicks at Doyle. His loafer flies off of his foot and sails onto the restaurant roof. His pants split and his back cracks. He doubles over in pain.

DUTCH
Ahh...shit...

DOYLE
You're pathetic.

Dutch stumbles painfully down to the pumps and leans on one. He shakes his head.

DUTCH
Here's the deal, Dobbsie. I had two hundred bucks in my wallet.

DOYLE
You said you were broke.

DUTCH
I lied.

DOYLE
You giant asshole! You dishonest, stupid jerk! We had money all this time? We could have been home.

DUTCH
Probably.
(continues)
You see, I had this plan.

DOYLE
I know.

DUTCH
You don't know.

DOYLE
I knew you were playing around. Stretching this thing out so we could get to know each other. And it blew up in your face.

DUTCH
Your face, too.

DOYLE
You made me give up my watch.

Dutch nods.

DOYLE
That was a gift from my Dad.

Dutch feels bad.

DUTCH
Sorry. I blew it. And I'm out of ideas. I'm gonna sit down here and hope I get arrested so I can get some sleep.

He slumps down on the island.

DOYLE
We have to keep moving.

Dutch peels off his remaining shoe. He reaches under the insole and finds his quarter. He sniffs it, winces and hands it to Doyle.

DUTCH
Call you mother. Tell her to send somebody for you or call Grampy and get a jet or whatever.

DOYLE
You can call, can't you?

DUTCH
No. I don't want to call. I'm sitting here. And that's it. If you call your Mom, tell her good luck, the Dutch Boy's calling it quits.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
You're dumping my Mom?

DUTCH
I'm sparing her a life of this kind of shit.

DOYLE
She's gonna blame me.

DUTCH
I'll write her a nice letter. Go on.

DOYLE
I thought you loved her.

DUTCH
I've talked and talked and talked to you until I want to puke coat hangers. I'm me, you're you. There's no reason on earth anymore why we should have anything to do with each other.

DOYLE
Okay but I think it's sick that you'll cut my Mom loose because you don't get along with me.

DUTCH
What do you care? You hate her. Don't fret. It's okay. She lives with your shit, she can handle mine.

DOYLE
I never said I hated her.

DUTCH
Sorry. You're the "picture is worth a thousand words" guy. Make your call. Give me a little peace.

Doyle backs away.

DOYLE
I don't hate my mother. For the record.

DUTCH
Kiss my ass. For the record.

DOYLE
We're not that close but there's no hatred.

DUTCH
Don't tell me this shit. I don't care anymore. Get it? Act like a rodent around somebody else. You busted my balls. Congratulations. Now leave me alone.

Doyle turns and walks up to the restaurant.

CU. DOYLE

He stops one more time. He turns.

DOYLE
Did she ever say that she thinks I hate her?

HIS POV

Dutch rises off the island, turns around slowly, bends over and moons Doyle with his split-ass pants. He turns back around and sits down.

CU. DOYLE

He feels sorrow and sympathy. He knows he's lost Dutch as much as he never wanted him. He continues to the restaurant.

CU. DUTCH

He sighs in defeat. He's tired, cold, sore and he's gotten-nowhere with the kid. He leans his head back on the gas pump.

INT. RESTAURANT. PAY PHONE

Doyle picks up the phone and dials.

INT. DOUG STANDISH'S APARTMENT. MASTER BATHROOM

Doug's girlfriend, Grace, is putting on her make-up. The PHONE RINGS. Doug's in the shower. She answers the phone.

GRACE
Hello?

INT. RESTAURANT. CU. DOYLE

He's puzzled by the voice.

DOYLE
(after a pause)
Is Mr. Standish in?

CU.. GRACE

She listens...

GRACE
He's in the shower. Who's this?

CU. DOYLE

He's startled. He quickly hangs up.

INT. STANDISH BATHROOM

Grace hangs up the phone. Doug calls from the shower.

DOUG (OC)
Who is it?

GRACE
They hung up.

CU. DUTCH

He's very alert and watching the restaurant. He quickly ducks his head and puts on the sorrowful look.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Doyle comes out of the restaurant. He looks at Dutch.

HIS POV

Dutch is hunched over looking like the defeated man.

EXT. GAS STATION

Doyle walks to Dutch. He stands before him.

DOYLE
We can make it home. We got this far didn't we?

Dutch doesn't respond.

DOYLE
Don't jack me around anymore. I saw you watching me the whole time.

CU. DUTCH

He looks up slowly. He's caught.

DUTCH
You did?

CU. DOYLE

He grins.

DOYLE
No.

CU. DUTCH

Stares angrily.

EXT. GAS STATION

Doyle steps aside as a carrier pulls in. Dutch holds out his hand.

DUTCH
Little help...

Doyle oofs Dutch up. He winces from the pain in his back.

DOYLE
Where are you going?

DUTCH
Home.

DOYLE
How?

Dutch taps his head.

DUTCH
I'm calling Natalie. Enough of this.

DOYLE
Wait a minute. It would mean something to me to not have to call my mother for help.

Dutch pulls open his coat. He has the pellet gun in his belt.

DUTCH
Remember this? I still owe you one. Let me call your mother and I'll forget about it.

DOYLE
No dice.

DUTCH
This isn't working. We're not masters of the open road. We got robbed by homebound hookers.

DOYLE
Because you fell asleep and I got horny?

Dutch smiles.

DUTCH
You did?

DOYLE
Sort of.

DUTCH
First time?

DOYLE
First time with a real person.

Dutch offers his hand.

DUTCH
Congratulations.

Doyle goes to shake his hand.

DUTCH
Slap it.

Doyle slaps Dutch's hand.

DUTCH
There you go.
(pause)
I'm not such a bad guy, am I?

DOYLE
Yeah, you are. But I'm still going to get you home.

DUTCH
<u>You</u> get <u>me</u> home? No chance, underpants. Gimme the quarter. I'm gonna see if they have a cheap cigar inside.

DOYLE
When you come out, I'll have a ride.

He hands the quarter to Dutch. He gives Doyle a look -- no way he's going to get them home. He waddles into the restaurant.

CU. DUTCH

He's seated, puffing on a cigar.

EXT. HIGHWAY. RUNNING SHOT

Dutch and Doyle are sitting inside of a huge section of pre-cast concrete conduit lashed to the bed of a semi trailer. The truck pulls ahead and rolls into the night.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOLEDO, OHIO. TRUCK DEPOT

The truck pulls into the depot, joining hundreds of others. It stops with a HISS. The DRIVER exits.

EXT. TRUCK. CONDUIT

Dutch and Doyle are sleeping. Doyle stirs and sits up. He orients himself.

DOYLE
Dutch?

Dutch stirs. He sits up.

DOYLE
We're here.

DUTCH
Where?

DOYLE
I don't know.

DUTCH
I'm sure there's a guard around. We'll just ask him.

EXT. DEPOT GATES

OC we hear Dutch and Doyle HOWLING IN PAIN. A beat and they appear out of the darkness. A pair of burly WATCHMEN have their arms twisted behind their backs. They run them up to and out the gate.

WATCHMAN 1
Get outta here!

Dutch remains hunched over. His back's killing him. Doyle shakes out his aching arm and yells back at the men.

DOYLE
I could sue you for this, you ignorant assholes!

Watchman 2 steps forward.

DUTCH
He didn't mean it.

DOYLE
I did so.
(to the Watchman)
And you can't hit me. I'm a minor.

He picks up Doyle by the shirt front and draws back on him.

DOYLE
My grandparents are personal friends of George and Barbara Bush!

EXT. STREET. TRASH CANS

Doyle crashes down on the heap of empty rubbish barrels.

EXT. DEPOT GATE

Dutch straightens up. He blocks Watchman 2 from going after Doyle again. Watchman 1 grabs him by the front. Dutch takes a hold of his sleeves.

DUTCH
Hold on. We're sorry. We don't want any trouble.

WATCHMAN 1
Let go of me!

He struggles with Dutch.

DUTCH
Take it easy! We're going.

WATCHMAN 1
I said get your hands off me.

DUTCH
You get back inside, we hit the road. Okay?

Watchman 2 comes up behind Dutch and slugs him in the back. Dutch yelps and drops his hold on Watchman 1. He falls to his knees.

EXT. STREET. TRASH CANS

Doyle picks himself up. He's on the verge of tears.

DOYLE
Get away from him!

EXT. GATE

Watchman 1 shoves Dutch over on his side. He and Watchman 2 chuckle at Doyle's bravado.

WATCHMAN 1
Yeah?

Doyle raises his hands.

WATCHMAN 2
You know, kid, a few years back, there were some guys in New York, that used to set fire to people like your buddy.

He reaches into his coat pocket and takes out a Bic lighter. Watchman 1 laughs.

WATCHMAN 1
Let's go.

He tugs on Watchman 2's sleeve. Watchman 2 bends down over Dutch.

WATCHMAN 2
They stink bad when they burn.

Doyle steps forward.

DOYLE
Leave him alone.

WATCHMAN 1
Al? Knock it off.
(to Doyle)
Get your pal outta here.

WATCHMAN 2
You're out numbered, boy.

Doyle lashes out at Watchman 2. He kicks him in the face, spins and lets Watchman 1 have it in the groin. He reaches into Dutch's coat and pulls out the pistol. He holds it on the two Watchmen as they recover.

DOYLE
Pete?

Dutch sits up. Puzzled. Doyle gives him a face, urging him to go along with him.

DOYLE
(to the Watchmen)
Face down, hands behind your heads!

The Watchmen roll over and put their hands behind their heads. Doyle eases over to Dutch and helps him up.

DUTCH
(with a smile)
Let's go. You don't have to shoot 'em.

Doyle returns the smile

DOYLE
(high drama)
I want to.

DUTCH
What's the point?

DOYLE
I'm tense. I gotta do it. I wanna see it. I wanna hear it.

DUTCH
Calm down. You just killed somebody.

WATCHMAN 1
Don't shoot.

DOYLE
I know, but the feeling's gone. I gotta do it again.

WATCHMAN 2
Please, don't.

DUTCH
It's the holiday season. They probably have families.

WATCHMAN 1
I do.

DOYLE
You gonna let me kill their families?

WATCHMAN 2
No!

DUTCH
It's alright, Lenny. Let 'em go. We'll find somebody else.

The Watchmen cringe as they wait out Doyle's decision. A long beat and Doyle steps away. The Watchmen breath sighs of relief.

DUTCH
You guys are very lucky. The boy hardly ever backs off once he gets his neck up.

WATCHMAN 1
Thank you.

WATCHMAN 2
Bless you.

CU. DUTCH

He looks at Doyle with a triumphant smile.

CU. DOYLE

His first real smile.

INT. RESTAURANT. BOOTH. LATER

A middle-aged WAITRESS is totalling a check for a handsomely dressed couple, MIKE and RIVA MALLOY. They're in their mid-thirties, successful, professional people. Something catches the Waitress' eye. She looks to the front of the establishment.

HER POV

Dutch and Doyle are standing at the cash register. Doyle has a fresh bruise on his forehead.

CU. WAITRESS

She's annoyed.

WAITRESS
(to Dutch)
Hey! Pal! Get outside. This isn't a warming house. Go on with ya! Now!

HER POV

Dutch is startled by the attack.

DUTCH
The boy has a wound on his head. We need to use your rest room.

INT. RESTAURANT. BOOTH

The Waitress finishes the check.

WAITRESS
(to the Malloys)
I'm sorry. From time to time these road people wander in. Excuse me.

She drops the check on the table and exits.

INT. RESTAURANT. THE MALLOYS

They exchange troubled looks.

INT. RESTAURANT. DUTCH AND DOYLE

Doyle steps back. Dutch is ready to do battle with the Waitress.

WAITRESS
I said, out.

DUTCH
Can he wash his face?

WAITRESS
No.

The Malloys approach.

DUTCH
I'll wait outside. Just let him...

WAITRESS
(yells across the restaurant)
Teddy! You wanna help me over here?

Mike Malloy interrupts the conversation.

MIKE
(to Dutch)
Excuse me. You're on the road?

DUTCH
(suspicious)
Yeah. Why?

RIVA
The boy's your son?

DUTCH
(after a pause)
That's right.

Riva looks at Mike. A silent conference. Dutch looks at the Waitress. He's not sure what they want.

DUTCH
We're up from Georgia on our way to Detroit. We lost our car, we got robbed...

RIVA
Oh, God...

Dutch catches on.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE. SAME TIME

Snow is falling.

INT. NATALIE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN

She's having coffee after dinner. Gritzi's doing dishes.

NATALIE
Maybe I should never have split up with Doug.

Gritzi firmly disagrees and expresses it with a disgusted head shake.

NATALIE
It didn't help Doyle.

GRITZI
It isn't my place to say anything but I have an opinion.

Natalie looks at her to let her know it's okay to express herself.

GRITZI
Everything that boy's ever done good or bad was to get somebody to pay attention to him.

Natalie nods. It isn't something she hasn't pondered.

NATALIE
And the divorce just made it worse. He wanted to go away to school. He wanted to get away from us. Doug's become his hero. I've become the villain. We're both villains. There are no heroes in his life.

EXT. HIGHWAY. LATER

A Saab sails past.

INT. CAR

Mike's driving. Riva's next to him. Dutch and Doyle are in the back seat.

MIKE
We live in Toledo. We both work. We left from the office. That's why we stopped so soon to eat.

RIVA
We're on our way down to Cincinnati to spend the holidays with my brother.

DUTCH
Isn't that nice.

DOYLE
You're going to Cincinnati?

RIVA
Uh, huh.

Doyle looks at Dutch with confusion. He looks out the window.

DOYLE
Aren't you going the wrong way?

Dutch looks out the window.

RIVA
(to Mike)
We'll turn around after we drop you off.

DUTCH
In Detroit?

MIKE
(chuckles)
No. Just up the road here.

RIVA
We'll leave you in good hands.

Doyle looks at Dutch. They have no idea what's going on.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOLEDO, OHIO. ABANDONED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Saab pulls into the parking lot and stops. Mike and Riva get out. Dutch and Doyle get out. They're baffled.

MIKE
They'll take care of you here.

DUTCH
Who?

RIVA
This is a center for displaced families. Mike's supervisor's on the board.

Mike offers his hand to Dutch.

MIKE
Good luck.

Dutch shakes it. He's still bewildered.

MIKE
And don't give up.
(to Doyle)
Don't ever lose faith in your Dad. He's doing his best.

RIVA
All our best for a happy holiday.

They get in the car and pull away.

EXT. PARKING LOT. DUTCH AND DOYLE

They watch the Saab pull out. They turn and look behind them to the school building. Then they look at each other.

CU. CHILD

A dirty, lost, hungry three year-old. CAMERA MOVES UP to his tired, defeated MOTHER. She's just out of her teens. She steps ahead, OUT OF FRAME to reveal a YOUNG MAN holding a BABY. He steps OUT OF FRAME revealing Doyle. He steps forward revealing Dutch.

INT. SCHOOL. CAFETERIA

Doyle and Dutch are in a food line. Homeless MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN sit at folding tables.

INT. CAFETERIA. TABLE

Dutch and Doyle sit down at the crowded table, squeezing in between a YOUNG MAN with a bloodied head and a BABY on his lap and a TODDLER. They have plastic bowls of soup and dinner rolls.

DUTCH
Excuse us.

DOYLE
Pardon me.

They settle in. Doyle opens his paper napkin and puts it in his lap. He reaches into his pocket and comes up with a Wet Nap. He opens it and washes his hands and face. His tablemates stare at him curiously. He uses the Wet Nap to clean his place at the table.

INT. CAFETERIA. TABLE

Doyle's tablemates stop eating to watch his preparations.

INT. CAFETERIA. DOYLE AND DUTCH

He examines his plastic spoon to see if it's clean. He blows on it. He adjusts his soup bowl, breaks his bread and using the most refined manners, begins eating. Dutch has been staring at him all the while.

DUTCH
Did you want to see the wine list?

Doyle stares at him for a moment then dips his spoon in the soup and brings it to his mouth. He anticipates a taste horror. He grimaces, closes his eyes and puts the spoon in his mouth. It's as though he's eating microwaved blood clots. He swallows the soup with difficulty. He glances down.

HIS POV

A tiny, dirty hand reaches surreptitiously for his dinner roll. Doyle's hand slams down on the roll.

CU. CHILD

A three year-old GIRL looks up fearfully, startled.

CU. DOYLE

He looks down at the Girl. A stern, automatic look.

DOYLE
That's mine.

CU. CHILD

She shrinks into her Mother's side.

CU. DOYLE

He holds his look on the child. He's touched by her fear and her need. He feels his shame. His face softens. He offers her the roll.

DOYLE
You can have it.

CU. CHILD

She takes the roll from Doyle.

INT. CAFETERIA. TABLE. DUTCH AND DOYLE

Dutch gives Doyle a nudge.

DUTCH
That was nice.

Doyle returns to his soup. As Dutch is looking at Doyle, the Baby on the lap of the Man next to Dutch swipes his dinner roll.

INT. GYMNASIUM

PARENTS and CHILDREN are sleeping on folding cots set-up on the floor in little family clusters.

INT. GYM. DUTCH AND DOYLE

They're down for the night. Next to each other. Dutch is having trouble getting comfy. His back is bothering him. The cot wobbles forward and the front legs collapse.

DUTCH
(whispers)
Son of a...

DOYLE
(whispers)
You have to click it.

Dutch gets up from his cot and checks underneath it. He sets the legs up, clicks it.

The MAN in the cot ahead of his, sits up and looks at Dutch.

MAN
(annoyed)
Is there a problem?

DUTCH
I got it, thanks.

Dutch tests the cot with his hands. He deems it safe and lies down. It GROANS under his weight. It slowly sinks to the floor.

DUTCH
(whispers)
Doyle?

DOYLE
(whispers)
What?

DUTCH
Can I switch cots with you?
Mine won't hold me.

DOYLE
How do you know it'll hold me?

DUTCH
I'm fifteen thousand cheeseburgers ahead of you in life.

Doyle sighs and gets up. Dutch rocks himself to his feet. He and Doyle set-up the collapsed cot. Doyle gets in it. Dutch sits on Doyle's cot. He tests it.

DUTCH
This is much better. Thanks.

DOYLE
You're entirely welcome.

Dutch lies down. He covers himself. Makes himself comfortable.

EXT. PARKING LOT

A dozen battered cars -- station wagons, vans, sedans. Loaded with the material of transient lives.

INT. GYM. CU. DUTCH. LATER

He's asleep.

CU. DOYLE

Doyle is on his side looking around the room. He can't sleep.

HIS POV. NURSING MOTHER

A YOUNG WOMAN is seated against the wall nursing her BABY. She's looking down gently at the child. CAMERA PANS OVER TO a little BOY and GIRL sleeping with legs entwined clutching tattered stuffed animals. CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO a MAN stroking the hair of a little BOY as he tries to get him to sleep.

CU. DOYLE

He's struck by the closeness of the families, their strength, their survival.

CU. DOYLE

He looks to his immediate RIGHT.

HIS POV

The little Girl who took his dinner roll is watching Doyle. Sucking her thumb. She smiles and pulls out her thumb. She offers it to him.

CU. DOYLE

His eyes gloss over with tears. He smiles and shakes his head, no. He holds up his own thumb as if to say, "I have my own, thanks".

CU. LITTLE GIRL

She smiles and returns her thumb to her mouth. Her MOTHER pulls her close, kisses her.

MOTHER
Shh...

She looks at Doyle. She gives him a smile.

MOTHER
(whispers)
Are you from Toledo?

CU. DOYLE

He replies in a soft, choked whisper.

DOYLE
Detroit.

CU. DUTCH

He opens his eyes when he hears Doyle speaking.

INT. GYM. WOMAN AND DOYLE

The Woman nods.

WOMAN
I'm from Canton, originally. We came to Toledo to look for work. My husband was laid off in June. He drove for an auto parts company that went under.

Doyle nods.

WOMAN
We've been here for a week. It's nice.

Doyle looks down at the thought that she considers the accommodations "nice".

WOMAN
We were living out of the car. That's pretty hard. What about you?

Doyle has nothing to say that could compare to her story.

DOYLE
We got here tonight.

WOMAN
Is that your Dad?

Doyle hesitates.

CU. DUTCH

He's listening. He knows what he'd like Doyle to say.

INT. GYM. DOYLE AND THE WOMAN

Doyle glances back at Dutch.

CU. DUTCH

He quickly closes his eyes.

CU. DOYLE

Turns back to the Woman, convinced that Dutch is asleep.

DOYLE
No.

CU. DUTCH

He opens his eyes. He's disappointed.

INT. GYM. DOYLE AND THE WOMAN

Doyle continues.

DOYLE
But he's the closest thing I've ever had to one.

CU. DUTCH

He's surprised.

CU. DOYLE

He continues.

DOYLE
I never see my real father. He walked-out on my mother and I.

CU. DUTCH

He's startled by the revelation.

CU. DOYLE

He's talking as much for himself as for the Woman. His head is bowed.

DOYLE
And then I walked out on my mother.

He looks at the Woman, tears in his eyes, surprised that he's revealed what he has to a stranger.

CU. WOMAN

She feels sorry for him. She offers the faintest of smiles.

CU. DOYLE

He takes in a clean, fresh breath and suppresses his emotion.

DOYLE
I'm so much better off than anybody here, it's sick that I'm complaining about anything.

CU. WOMAN

She looks around the gym with a smile.

WOMAN
Everyone in here can find something to feel lucky about if they think about it. You think about it, too.
(pause)
Get some sleep.

CU. DOYLE

He nods and returns the smile.

DOYLE
Thanks.

He lies down.

CU. DUTCH

He's thinking about what Doyle's said. He'd like to respond but doesn't know how to let Doyle know he was listening.

DUTCH
Doyle?

CU. DOYLE

His eyes pop open. He's startled to hear Dutch's voice.

INT. GYM. DUTCH AND DOYLE

Dutch rolls over on his back.

DUTCH
While you were brushing your teeth I called your Mom. I told her we were at the Holiday Inn. So she wouldn't worry. Is that okay?

DOYLE
(after a pause)
Yeah.

DUTCH
'Cause I said I wouldn't call.

DOYLE
It's okay.

DUTCH
Good night.

He closes his eyes.

DOYLE
Did you hear me talking?

DUTCH
Not really.

DOYLE
I meant it.

DUTCH
I appreciate that.

A long pause.

DOYLE
Are you still gonna shoot me in the ass?

DUTCH
(pause)
Yes.

DOYLE
(pause)
Good night.

DUTCH
Good night.

Dutch lifts up and rolls over on his side. A long beat and his cot collapses with a CRASH! BABIES CRY. Lights go on. Everyone in the shelter is rattled from their slumber.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE

Over the night a dusting of snow has fallen. Cars are parked in the driveway.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Natalie's three BROTHERS, her FATHER, and an UNCLE are watching the football pre-game show.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Natalie's MOTHER, three SISTERS-IN-LAW, an AUNT and her SISTER are talking.

INT. KITCHEN

Natalie's inspecting an appetizer tray. Gritzi's basting the turkey.

NATALIE
They should be here by now.

GRITZI
It snowed last night.
Travel's probably slow.

NATALIE
I'm worried.

GRITZI
There's no need.

NATALIE
I...

The DOORBELL RINGS.

NATALIE
(excited)
That's them!

She stops herself as she realizes what she's going to face seeing Doyle. Gritzi knows.

GRITZI
He'll be happy to see you.

Natalie hurries from the kitchen.

INT. FOYER

Natalie slows as she enters the foyer. Her Mother is going for the door.

NATALIE
Mother? I'll get it.

Her mother backs off. Natalie composes herself, straightens her clothes, takes a breath and opens the door.

EXT. PORCH. DOOR

It opens on a smiling Natalie. The smile fades.

INT. FOYER. DOOR

Doug stands at the door with his parents, MR. and MRS. STANDISH.

DOUG
Hello, Natalie.

INT. FAMILY ROOM. LATER

Doug's father is with the men. He tires of the ballgame and hits the remote to the bewilderment of the other men.

MR. STANDISH
They're going to lose anyway.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mrs. Standish is with the ladies. There's a horrible silence that the blue-haired blueblood breaks.

MRS. STANDISH
(to Natalie's mother)
Isn't that the same dress you had on last Thanksgiving?

INT. KITCHEN. LATER

Natalie and Doug are sitting at the kitchen table.

DOUG
I wish you would have told me you sent your boyfriend to get Doyle.

NATALIE
Why? So you could stop it?

DOUG
In part, yes. I don't know the guy.

NATALIE
He's fine.

DOUG
He's a truck driver?

NATALIE
He leases trucks. He used to be a truck driver.

DOUG
Classy.

NATALIE
You don't have any business here. You didn't arrange in advance to see Doyle...

DOUG
You're talking about my son. I don't make arrangements to see him. I don't give a goddamn what you or your lesbian lawyer says. My dealings with my son are my business.

NATALIE
You don't have any dealings with your son.

DOUG
Is that so?

NATALIE
That's so.

DOUG
How are you getting along with him?

NATALIE
Terrible.

DOUG
Don't give me any shit then.

NATALIE
At least I'm trying.

DOUG
And alot of good it's doing you.
(changes the subject)
What time is he going to be here?

NATALIE
I don't know. He's on his way.

EXT. HIGHWAY. CU. AUTO GRILL

A dented, wounded Ford Country Squire grill. CAMERA SLIDES QUICKLY AROUND the side of the wagon, past faded paint, dents, rust, peeling plastic wood panelling, RISING TO DOYLE's face in the rear passenger window.

INT. CAR

The Woman we saw in the gym is sitting next to her HUSBAND. He's in his late twenties, thin, wiry, long hair, earring, flannel shirt, quilted vest. Dutch and Doyle are in the back seat. The little Girl is between them.

HUSBAND
I want to thank you for this.

DUTCH
Forget about it. I can always use a good driver.

DOYLE
Dutch used to drive a truck. Now he owns the whole company.

DUTCH
(modest)
Half a dozen trucks. Big deal.

DOYLE
You know, you could stay at Dutch's house until you find something.

Dutch gives him a look.

DOYLE
Right?

WOMAN
We wouldn't do that.

DOYLE
It's okay. He won't be there.

DUTCH
No?

DOYLE
You'll be at our place.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER

Doug's sitting in a chair by the window. The women are sitting nervously about the room. Mr. Standish has joined Mrs. Standish. He's smoking a pipe to the consternation of the ladies.

MR. STANDISH
Doug? I think you're a fool not to call the police. Who knows what could have happened? We don't know this fella from Adam.

NATALIE'S MOTHER
He's a wonderful man.

MRS. STANDISH
If he's so wonderful why hasn't he married your daughter?

Doug snickers.

INT. DINING ROOM

Natalie's helping Gritzi set the table.

GRITZI
They're staying?

NATALIE
Do we have enough for three more?

GRITZI
Sure.

NATALIE
I'm sure when Doyle gets here and sees Doug, they'll stay. Or there'll be hell to pay.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

The station wagon rumbles down a woodsy mansion street. It turns sharply.

CU. OVEN

The timer goes off -- DING!

EXT. HOUSE. STATION WAGON

The station wagon roars INTO CAMERA and STOPS.

EXT. HOUSE

The battered station wagon is parked between a Rover and an XJ6.

INT. DINING ROOM

Natalie hears CAR DOORS SLAM. The DOG BARKS.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Doug gets up from the chair.

INT. FOYER

Natalie comes in from the dining room. Doug comes in from the living room.

CU. DOUG

A cruel, hard look at Natalie. Mrs. Standish comes up behind him.

CU. NATALIE

She knows she's going to lose Doyle to him. Her look is weak and defeated.

INT. FOYER

Doug steps to the door, blocking it from Natalie. He opens it.

CU. DOOR

It opens on Doyle and Dutch behind him. Doyle's shocked. Dutch stares for a moment. His nightmare. He looks down.

CU. DOUG

A big, charming, confident smile.

DOUG
Hey, buddy! Surprise.

CU. NATALIE

She bites her lower lip. She turns away. She's hurt and humiliated.

CU. DOYLE

He gets over his shock. He takes a breath. Finds his strength. He nods to Doug and steps inside.

INT. FOYER

Doyle steps around Doug.

DOYLE
Mom?

CU. NATALIE

Her back to CAMERA. She looks up and turns slowly. She's stunned.

CU. DOYLE

A big, warm, friendly smile.

INT. FOYER

Doyle and Natalie come together. She brings him into her arms and holds him tight.

CU. DOUG

He's stunned.

CU. THE STANDISH'S

They stare in bewilderment at the reunion of Doyle and Natalie.

CU. DOUG

In his panic he looks to Dutch.

CU. DUTCH

He grins with enormous satisfaction.

DUTCH
Hi. I'm Dutch Dooley. You must be the unwelcome guest.

CU. DOUG

He glares at Dutch.

CU. NATALIE AND DOYLE

She kisses his forehead. Doyle turns back to Doug. He's sad but strong.

DOYLE
Dad? Shouldn't you be in Europe?

CU. DOUG

He glares at Doyle.

INT. FOYER

Gritzi walks in with an armload of coats.

EXT. HOUSE. DOOR

Doug stomps out carrying his coat. Mr. Standish follows carrying his coat, wearing his hat. Mrs. Standish stumbles out, confused, sputtering.

INT. DINING ROOM. LATER

Everyone's gathered around the dining room table. Natalie's family, Dutch, Doyle, Natalie, Gritzi.

DUTCH
Excuse me. Dave?

DOYLE
Yeah?

DUTCH
Before we start, could you run into the other room and get my coat. I have something in there for your mother.

DOYLE
Seriously?

DUTCH
Yeah.

NATALIE
Can't it wait?

DUTCH
It's something real special.

Doyle pushes away from the table and heads away from Dutch for the living room. Dutch quickly signals Natalie with his hand to move aside. She doesn't understand.

DUTCH
(loud whisper)
Get down!

She ducks. Dutch jumps up from the table. He reaches around behind his back and pulls out the air pistol. He assumes the cop stance, takes rapid aim down the table and...

CU. FOYER

Something suddenly dawns on Doyle. His eyes bulge.

DUTCH'S POV

Down the pistol barrel.

CU. DUTCH

Grins and squeezes the trigger.

MUSIC

FADE

TITLES

END